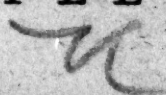


THE
MANNERS
OF THE
CHRISTIANS.

TRANSLATED from the FRENCH of the
judicious and learned

Abbé FLEURY.



BY

The REV. CHARLES CORDELL,

Correspondent Member of the Royal Society of Scotch
ANTIQUARIES.

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The Rev. GORDON.

Correspondence of the Society of Friends.

NEWCASTLE.

Printed by HOBSON, at the
No. 4, St. John's Street, Newcastle.
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W. L. GORDON.

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APPROBATION
Of the BISHOP of MEAUX.

THE best remedy that can be applied to the relaxation of discipline, is to lay before Christians the manners of their forefathers, and to call them back to the origin of Christianity. This is what M. Fleury has done with great learning and piety. We therefore exhort the Faithful carefully to read this work, in which we have found nothing, but what perfectly agrees with the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Faith. Given at Paris, the 28th of Feb. 1682.

J. BENIGNE, *Bishop of Meaux.*

APPROBATION
Of Monsr. PIROT, Doctor and Professor of the Sorbonne.

HOWEVER great an idea may be formed of the work entitled, *The Manners of the Christians*, above that of *The Manners of the Israelites*, I look upon it as perfectly executed and completed. The Author appears to me himself in both works, equally judicious, exact, and pious; not less successful in painting the objects themselves, than in sketching out the shades; and pointing out as distinctly the character of the Faithful of the new covenant, as he had before done that of the Israelites, who were no more than types and figures of the Christians. I think myself obliged to give this testimony to the public, as far as I can judge of this work, after having read it with the greatest attention. In Sorbonne, this 18th of Feb. 1682.

PIROT.

THE
MANNERS
OF THE
CHRISTIANS.

§ I. DIVISION of this TREATISE.

I Shall divide this Treatise into four Parts. The First will represent the manners of the Christians of Jerusalem, to the destruction of that city. This first state of Christianity, altho' its duration was short, deserves a separate consideration. The Second Part will comprise the time the Persecutions lasted; that is to say, the three first centuries: And such as wish to see the proofs of what I relate, will find them in the two first volumes of my Church History.* In the Third Part, I shall describe the state of the Church, in the enjoyment of liberty, from the time of Constantine: And in the Fourth, I shall enquire into the causes of the changes that have since happened.

§ II. PART I.

LIFE of JESUS-CHRIST.

AS the Christian Religion is not a human invention, but a work of God, it re-

* *Histoire Ecclesiastique par Mons. Fleury.*

ceived its perfection at the very first, like the Universe itself. "A man must have lost his reason," says Tertullian, "to imagine that the Apostles were ignorant of any truth useful to salvation; and that, in after ages, any thing hath been discovered, with regard to morals and conduct of life, more wise, or more sublime, than what JESUS-CHRIST himself taught them."* But this Doctrine, so excellent in itself, has produced different effects, according to the different dispositions of those who received it; and the different measures of grace with which God accompanied it. The true Israelites, already instructed by the Tradition of their Fathers, and by reading the holy Scriptures, brought up from the cradle in the knowledge of the true God, and the observation of his law, were disposed to practise it in its utmost perfection, as soon as ever this perfection was discovered to them; and as soon as they understood what the salvation was, which the Messias was to procure them, and what was to be the nature of his kingdom. There was a much greater difficulty in leading to perfection the Gentiles, who had hitherto lived without God, and without law;† accustomed to suffer themselves to be led, like brute beasts, before dumb idols, and to plunge in all sorts of crimes.‡ It is therefore among the Christians of the first Church of Jerusalem, that we must look for a model of the most per-

* Tert. Praescript. c. xxii. † Eph. ii. 12. ‡ 1. Cor. xii. 2.
fest

§II. P. I. OF THE CHRISTIANS.

fect life, and, consequently, the happiest that can be found on earth.

We must begin with the life of JESUS-CHRIST himself: He is the model, as well as the source of all perfection. He has set us the example, that we may do as he has done.* And this is one of the great blessings of the Incarnation, that the WORD thereby became visible, to the end that he might not only be the object of our admiration; but also the rule by which we were to reform our manners. I am sensible, so divine a life could not be written, as it ought, except by those, who had seen, with their own eyes, the WORD OF LIFE;† had heard him with their own ears, and felt him with their own hands; and were animated by his spirit. Yet every one may take notice, at least, according to his abilities, of what appears to him the fittest to be imitated by man; leaving others to discover therein infinitely more, in proportion as they are advanced in prayer, and the practice of the Christian virtues.

First of all, we see in JESUS-CHRIST the virtues of Infancy. He was tractable and submissive to his parents: He gained the love of every body; for it is said of him, that as he increased in age, *he increased likewise in wisdom, and in grace, or favour, before God and man.*‡ Of all the rest of his youth, to the age of thirty, we know nothing, except that he lived in the small town of Nazareth,

* John xiii. 15.

† 1. John i. 1.

‡ Luke ii. 40.

passing for the Son of a Carpenter, and following himself the business of a Carpenter.* This silence of history expresses, better than words could do, the state of retirement and obscurity, in which JESUS-CHRIST was pleased to spend the greatest part of his life; though he came for no other end, than to be the light of the world. He allotted thirty years to a private life, and only three or four to his preaching and public ministry; in order to shew that the general duty of all men is to labour in silence, and that there is only a small number who ought to enter on any public functions; and that for the space of time only, which the order of God and charity for their neighbour, may oblige them to do so.

The Trade he chose, deserves some attention. To live by the labour of one's own hands, is a poorer state of life, than to have lands to cultivate, or cattle to feed. Whether he followed the business of a house-carpenter, or made ploughs and other instruments of husbandry, according to an ancient Tradition;† it is certain, that the business he followed, was hard and laborious; but at the same time, useful, and even necessary to society: And, consequently, more honourable than those trades, which administer only to luxury and pleasure. Thus he spent his youth; continuing with his family, and staying in the place where he had

* Matt. xiii. 55.—Mark vi. 3.
Tryph.

† Just. in Dial. cum

been brought up; leading a free and honourable life, but serious and employed; bearing the punishment imposed on all mankind in the person of Adam; and constantly setting an example of the two virtues he chiefly recommended, viz. meekness and humility.*

Before he entered on the work of his mission, he prepared himself by baptism, prayer, and fasting.† He stood not in need of these preparations: He did so, as he himself tells us, *to fulfil all righteousness*,‡ and to set us an example. His fast of forty days and forty nights is generally looked upon as miraculous, as well as those of Moses and Elias. But I know not if we be sufficiently acquainted with the strength of nature. St Augustine assures us, that he had it from people of credit, that a certain person had gone forty days and forty nights without any food:§ And Theodoret testifies, that St Simeon Stylites had, at the time he wrote, already passed twenty-eight Lents in that manner; after having brought himself, by degrees, to that prodigious abstinence.¶ We see, even at this day, many idolatrous Indians pass twenty days, or more, without any food.

During this fast, and in that frightful desert, how did JESUS-CHRIST employ himself, otherwise than in prayer? Let us meditate, in a spirit of humility, upon what

* Matt. xi. 29.

† Luke iii. 21.

‡ Matt. iii. 15.

§ Aug. Ep. 36. ad Casul. n. 27.

¶ Hist. Relig.

sa. lxxvi. p. 88c.

the Scripture says with regard to this subject; and, amongst other things, upon the adorable prayer we read in St John:* And let us lose no part of what is told us concerning his manner of praying. He prayed in the night-time, and sometimes spent whole nights in prayer.† He prayed in the open air, in a garden, on the mountains, in the deserts, alone and retired. He raised his eyes and hands towards heaven. He fell down on his knees; he prostrated himself on the ground; shewing, on every occasion, the profound respect he had for his Father.

He allows himself to be tempted, to encourage us, by his example, to fight against the devil; and defends himself against his attacks, only by passages of Scripture; in order to teach us, among other things, to constantly meditate thereon, and seek therein rules for our own conduct, and to determine us how we ought to act on every occasion.

After this he begins to appear in public, and to lead a life which is a model of that of Priests, Bishops, and all public characters. His chief employment is instructing and converting. He came, as he says himself, *to seek and to save that which was lost.*‡ He attracts the eyes and hearts of all, by curing the sick and performing other miracles; which, moreover, were necessary to prove his Mission. This is what several holy Bishops have

* John xvii. † Luke vi. 12. ‡ Luke xix. 10.

imitated, even without the gift of miracles; in gaining the respect and love of their people by their abundant alms, by the protection they afforded the oppressed, by reconciling differences, and other sensible benefits. But even the miracles themselves which JESUS-CHRIST performed, afforded him an opportunity of displaying many imitable virtues, such as simplicity, humility, and patience. He performed his miracles without eagerness, without pride, without ostentation. He seldom allowed himself to be entreated to perform any; and then only to shew the faith of those, who requested them. He concealed his miracles with as much care as other men conceal their crimes. He seems to attribute the cures he performed, rather to the faith of the sick, than to his own power: and therefore performed very few miracles at Nazareth, on account of the unbelieving disposition of the people.* He gives the whole glory of them to his Father. *I can do nothing of myself,†* says he; *the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works.‡*

What patience did it not require to bear with that incredible multitude of sick, who were, for the most part, a set of poor miserable wretches, that followed him continually, were eager to touch him, and kept pressing upon him?§ This we see, when he cured the woman afflicted with a bloody flux;||

* Mark vi. 6. † John v. 30. ‡ Ibid. xiv. 10.

§ Mark v. 25. || Ibid. iii. 9.

and when he told his disciples to get him a boat, lest the multitude should throng about him too much. If he went into a house, the whole town gathered about the door; * he was there beset on all sides, and was not allowed even time to eat. † He was obliged, at last, to enter the towns only in the most private manner; ‡ and, very often, to stay out in the deserts. Here, however, the people gathered about him in crouds, as appears from the five thousand he fed there. It was to avoid these crouds that he went upon the mountains to pray; spent the nights there in prayer; and got a little sleep when he could, as he did in the boat during the storm. §

His life was then more toilsome, than when he worked at his trade, which he had not time now to do; since he allowed some women to follow him, who supplied him with necessaries out of what they had; || and kept some money by him, which he intrusted with Judas: ¶—such was the value JESUS set upon money! Out of the little he had he gave alms: ** but he had nothing, when he was obliged to make St Peter find, by a miracle, the tribute-money for the first-born, which was only half a sicle, or about eight-pence sterling. ††

In fact, he constantly lived in great poverty. He says himself, that he had not a place

* Mark i. 32. † Ibid. iii. 20. ‡ Ibid. i. 45.

§ Mat. viii. 24.—Luke xiii. 23. || Mark xv. 47.

¶ John xii. 6. ** Ibid. xiii. 29.

†† Mat. xvii. 26.

to rest his head ; * that is to say, that he lodged wherever people were kind enough to receive him into their houses. At his death, we do not find that he had any thing, but his clothes. He says, he came not to be served, but to serve. † He travelled on foot; and when he got upon an Ass to make his entry into Jerusalem, that is easily seen to have been an extraordinary action. He travelled in the heat of the day. When he met the Samaritan woman, it is said, that it was about mid-day; and that he was resting himself against the well, being tired with walking. ‡ For, though he was master of nature, we do not find that he performed any miracle for his own convenience, or to save himself any trouble. It is said, and that only once, that Angels came down and ministered to him, § to shew what was due to him, if he had been pleased to make use of it.

In this same meeting with the Samaritan woman, we see his extreme modesty; since it is said, that his disciples were surprized that he talked with a woman; §—and, indeed, his enemies never dared to invent any calumny to impeach his chastity. This modesty of his was not, however, a constrained modesty: nothing was feigned, nothing affected in him, who was the declared enemy of all hypocrisy; and was truth itself. His behaviour was plain, easy, natural, and lively. He looked people in the face, as he did the young man,

* Mat. viii. 20. † Mark x. 45. ‡ John iv. 6.

§ Mat. iv. 11. § John iv. 27.

for whom he took an affection, on account of the good dispositions he shewed.* It is often said, that he stretched forth his hand, or used some other expressive gesture. He sometimes, in his looks and words, shewed surprize, indignation, and anger; as also a difficulty in bearing with the incredulity of men. At other times he exhibited a tenderness of affection; as when he ordered little children to be brought to him; when he laid his hands on them, and embraced them;† to recommend innocence and humility.

There was nothing singular in his exterior, nothing that could outwardly distinguish him from the rest of the Jews, from any other private man, or one of the common people, as he calls himself; for that is the meaning of the expression, *The son of man*. His life was hard and laborious, but without any particular practices of austerity. He eat as others did; he drank wine, and made no difficulty of going to grand entertainments, such as the marriage feasts of Cana,‡ and the entertainment St Matthew made for him.¶ He was, however, so little concerned about eating, that his disciples pressing him to eat on a particular occasion, when he evidently stood in need of food, he answered them: *I have other food, which you know not of; my food is to do the will of my Father.*§

With this so simple and plain an exterior, JESUS-CHRIST preserved a wonderful dig-

* Mark x. 21,

† Mark ix. 34—x. 13.

‡ John ii. 1.

¶ Luke v. 29.

§ John iv. 32. 34.

nity.

nity. He had a very serious and grave look. He was seen, on two occasions, to weep: but St. Chrysostome remarks, that it is not said that he ever laughed or smiled.* He asked no body for any thing, as he rather chose to perform a miracle, than to borrow a small piece of money which he wanted to pay away.† Nevertheless, when he wanted the Afs to make his entry on, and to bespeak the room, where he was to celebrate his Passover, he speaks then, as one knowing very well, that nothing would be refused him. He acted, in general, according to his own maxim: that it is a *greater happiness to give than to receive*;‡ since, while he was continually diffusing so many benefits, he received so little. Every body sought him and ran after him; and he sought no one in particular: but going from town to town, and exhorting all to repentance, he was of easy access to the sick, and to sinners who were willing to be converted. He was condescending to the latter, so far as to eat and lodge with them; and even to allow a woman to touch him, and to perfume his feet;|| which looked like a piece of delicacy very opposite to his poor and mortified life.

As he came to instruct all mankind, he constantly taught both in public and in private. He was accustomed, on the Sabbaths, to explain the sacred scriptures in the synagogue,§ as the Jewish Doctors did: and

* In Mat. Hom. 6. Mor.

† Mat. xvii 26.

‡ Acts xx. 35.

|| Luke vii. 38.

§ Ibid. iv. 16.

hence

hence the name of *Master* or *Rabbi* was given him. But he had an air of authority, which quite distinguished him from them. He *spoke like one having power,** and they *wondered at the words of grace, which came from his mouth.†*

His discourse is plain and clear, unadorned with any figures, but such as are lively and natural, and which are never wanting to a person, who is persuaded himself of the truths he utters, and are the most effectual towards persuading others. "His Discourses, says St Justin, were short and concise, because he was not a Sophist, but the Virtue and Word of God."‡ He sometimes answers more by actions than by words, as when he said to the Disciples of John the Baptist: *Go, tell John what you have heard, and what you have seen.*§ He laid down great principles, without being at the trouble of proving them, or of drawing the necessary consequences from them. These principles carry with them a light of truth, which cannot be opposed, but by a voluntary blindness; and it is to punish that bad disposition of heart, that he sometimes speaks in parables and enigmatically.¶ If he makes use of proofs, they are forcible reasoning, and familiar comparisons. His Miracles and Virtues were stronger proofs in themselves, and more adapted to every capacity, than all the syllogisms of the Philosophers. The learned, such as Nico-

* Mat. vii. 29 † Luke iv. 22. ‡ 2 Apol.

§ Mat. xi. 4. ¶ Ibid. xiii. 18.

demus,* and the ignorant, such as the man born blind, felt equally the force of these proofs.† He often joins thereto the authorities of the Law and the Prophets, shewing that his doctrine proceeded from the same wisdom, and his miracles from the same power: and that the old and new Testament are grounded on the same Divine authority. It is for this reason he so often makes use of the old scriptures, either by expressly quoting them, or by frequent allusions to them, which are easily discovered by such as are conversant with those sacred books.

He forms his Disciples in the same spirit of submission to the Divine authority: Quite different from that spirit of dispute and contention, in which the Philosophers brought up their followers, under pretence of going in search of truth with them. JESUS-CHRIST goes not in search of it; he doubts not like Socrates; he speaks with confidence; and being fully possessed of the truth, he unfolds it in the manner he pleases. That his Disciples might benefit by his conversation and example, he lived in common with them, they all making only one family. They followed him wherever he went; they eat with him; they lodged with him; and thus had a continual opportunity of studying him.‡ He made them imitate his poverty; he sent them without money or provisions; and even, while they were with him, hunger sometimes

* John iii. 2. † Ibid. ix. 31. ‡ Tert. Præscr. c. 22.

forced them to take what they could find in the fields, as the ears of corn, which they plucked on the sabbath-day.

He took great care to instruct them. What they had not understood in his public discourses, he explained to them in private, treating them as his friends and intimates, and telling them every thing he had heard from his Father; as far as they were able to bear it.* He, however, never indulges their curiosity; he sometimes expressly checks it, as upon their asking him when the world was to end, both before and after his resurrection;† and when St Peter wanted to know what was to become of St John.‡ At other times he contents himself with giving them no answer, as when St Jude asks him, why he did not manifest himself to the world?|| He bore, with the greatest patience, their dullness, their ignorance, their vanity, and all their faults, of which he laboured, without ceasing, to correct them.

By his *Disciples* I here mean the Twelve he had chosen to be constantly with him;§ but the scripture calls all those likewise his *Disciples*, who followed his doctrine, and had received his baptism. The number of them was large, since there were a hundred and twenty of them shut up with the Apostles at the election of St Matthias;** and above five hundred of them, all together, saw

* Mat. xiii. 11—xv. 16.—John xv. 15.

† Mat. xxiv. 36.—Acts i. 7. ‡ John xxi. 22.

|| John xiv. 12. § Mark iii. 14. ** Acts i. 15.

JESUS-CHRIST after his resurrection.* The Church therefore then was composed of two parts, that is, of the Faithful people, who are simply called *Disciples*, or *Brethren*; and those whom JESUS-CHRIST had chosen for the public Ministry, viz. the Twelve Apostles, and the seventy-two Disciples, whom he sent, two and two, before him to the places whither he was going.†

We see in these distinctions different degrees of charity worthy of our attention. JESUS-CHRIST teaches us that every man is that neighbour, whom we ought to love as ourselves;‡ and, in fact, he laid down his life for all mankind. But he had a particular affection for his Disciples and for his Apostles among all others; and amongst them, for St Peter, and the two brothers, the sons of Zebedee; and, above all, for St John.

I examine not into the reasons, which we cannot know, of these distinctions, and the particular marks he gave of his affection for St Peter and St John. It is sufficient to observe that, by his example, he has authorized and sanctified the natural affections, and the particular connections from inclination and friendship, which may be formed among individuals, without prejudice to universal charity. He had also other friends besides his Apostles. He loved Lazarus and his two sisters: he himself calls the former his *Friend*: and he sufficiently testified his

* Cor. xv. 6.

† Luke x. 1.

‡ Ibid. x. 19.

sensibility by weeping for his death, when he was going to raise him to life.*

Who can doubt of the tender affection he had for his holy Mother, seeing the care he took of her at his death? He, nevertheless, seems to speak harshly to her, when she found him amidst the Doctors, and when she told him of the wine running short at the marriage-feast of Cana.† He reprimands the woman who commended her barely for being his Mother, and declares that he considers as his mother or relations, only such as do the will of his Father.‡ The reason was; he knew how to treat that great soul; and wanted to shew, that flesh and blood had no share in his affections.

His charity extended to all. *Come to me,* says he, *all ye who suffer, and are heavy laden, and I will ease you.*|| He had compassion on the multitudes that followed him, seeing them in distress, and abandoned like sheep without a shepherd.§ It was compassion that twice made him multiply the loaves of bread: It was compassion that made him raise to life the son of the widow of Naim.** Like a good citizen, he loved his country, the people of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem.†† He wept over it, in the midst of his triumphant entry; seeing the misfortunes it was going to draw down on itself by its

* John xi. 5, 11, 35.

† Luke ii. 49—John ii. 4—Luke xi. 28.

‡ Mat. xii. 48, &c. || Ibid ix. 36. § Ibid. xiv. 19.

** Luke vii. 13. †† Ibid. xix. 41.

crimes. He taught obedience to Princes, and respect to the Priests and Doctors of the Law, how much soever they were corrupted: And he himself observed, with the greatest exactness, the laws and ceremonies of Religion, though he came to abolish these ceremonies, and was master of the Sabbath, and of all the laws.* He never would assume to himself any authority in temporal matters; not so much as to become umpire between two brothers.† When he was interrogated judicially, he answered his judges according to their respective competency; the High Priest on his quality of the Christ and the Son of God; and Pilate as to that of King. He declared his kingdom was not of this world; and that consequently his doctrine changed nothing in the established order of human affairs. It would be too great a piece of rashness to aim at pointing out all his virtues: The consideration of them all would be infinite; and those pious souls, who attentively read and meditate on the Gospel, discover, every day, new wonders. Let us add only one word on his Passion, wherein he gave the greatest and most useful example, since there is nothing so common in life as sufferings.

The distressful condition to which JESUS-CHRIST was reduced in the Garden of Olives, shews that he was susceptible of fear and sorrow like other men; and that consequently, it was by a great effort of virtue,

* Matt. xii. 8.

† Luke xii. 14.

that he suffered so much afterwards. As he was like us in every thing, sin alone excepted, he experienced every inconvenience of life, such as hunger, thirst, lassitude, and pain. We do not indeed read that he was ever sick; But this might be, because sickness is commonly the effect of some excess, at least in labour; and nothing could be irregular in a body directed by Wisdom itself.

In his Passion, he suffers with an invincible constancy, without making any defence or resistance; and without refusing to undergo the tortures inflicted on him. He is as immoveable as a rock amidst blows and insults. His silence, above all, is astonishing. He opens not his mouth, though with a single word he could confound his accusers, the false witnesses and the Judges themselves; because he knew them incapable of hearing any thing in his justification. Lastly, on the Cross itself, and in the midst of all the agonies of his sufferings, he preserves an entire liberty, and even tranquillity of mind. He prays for his executioners; he rewards the faith of the good thief; he provides for the solace of his Mother; he completely fulfils the Prophecies, and recommends his soul to God.

The Apostles having received the Holy Ghost, became, as it were, living images of JESUS-CHRIST, on whose model all the Faithful ought to form themselves. They are not afraid to say: *Be followers of me,* (says St. Paul) *as I am of JESUS-CHRIST:*

And

And elsewhere: *And of those who live according to the form of life I have set you.**

And, indeed, though they took great pains in teaching, they did more by their example than by their discourses. From among the Faithful they chose Disciples, whom they instructed in a more particular manner than the rest, as JESUS-CHRIST had done to them. These stuck close to their persons, living with them, eating with them, and lying in the same room. It is thus at least, that the Author of the Recognitions represents St Peter living with his Disciples: And this work is ancient, though not authentic. These Disciples accompanied the Apostles in their journies, and stayed to govern the Churches, in proportion as they were formed.

Thus we see St Peter accompanied by St Mark, whom he calls his son;† by St Clement, so famous throughout the whole Church; by St Evodius, who succeeded him at Antioch; by St Linus and St Cletus, who succeeded him at Rome. With St Paul we see St Luke, St Titus, St Timothy, and the same St Clement. With St John the Apostle, we see St Polycarp and St Papias. These Saints studied to retain the doctrine of the Apostles in their memories, rather than commit it to writing,‡ and taught it more by their practice than by their discourses.¶ Thus

* 1. Cor. xi. 1.—Phil. iii. 17. † Pet. v. 13.

‡ Euf. 3. Hist. c. 8. ¶ 1. Tim. iv. 12.

imitating their masters, they became, as St Paul says, so many examples to the Faithful, by the word and good works;* by Faith, Charity, Chastity, Gravity, and the whole conduct of their lives. They did more; they themselves brought up Disciples capable of instructing and training others. This is what St Paul recommends to Timothy: *What ye have heard from me before many witnesses, intrust to faithful men, who shall be capable also of instructing others.*† And here you see Tradition is a more proper means for perpetuating a doctrine than writing, even by the confession of the Philosophers, who wrote so much.‡

§ III. PART II.

CHURCH of JERUSALEM.

BUT let us return to those who were instructed and immediately governed by the Apostles, and particularly to that Church of Jerusalem which JESUS-CHRIST began to build with his own hands upon the foundation of the Synagogue, and which was not only the model, but the origin and source of all the others. Let us see the account the Scripture gives us of these First Believers. *They persevered in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communion of breaking of bread, and in prayer.*||—And a little after: *And all they that believed were together, and had all things*

* Tim. ii. 7

† 2. Tim. ii. 2.

‡ Plato in Phædro.

|| Acts ii. 42.

common: They sold their possessions and goods, and divided them to all, according as every man had need. And they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house; they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart: praising God, and having favour with all the people.* And in another place: And the multitude of Believers had but one heart and one soul: Neither did any one say that ought of the things he possessed were his own, but all things were common to them.† Neither was there any one among them that wanted. For as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold, and laid it down before the feet of the Apostles.‡ And distribution was made to every man according as he had need.† And farther in another place: And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch; but of the rest no man durst join them, but the people extolled them much. And the multitude of men and women that believed in the Lord, was more encreased.¶

The summary of this description is Instructions, Prayer, Communion, Union of hearts, a Communication of temporal goods, and Joy in themselves; and from without, the Respect, Esteem, and Love of the people. This Church consisted of both sexes, of every age and condition, and became very numerous in a short time.§ Three thousand were converted by the first sermon of St Peter; and five thou-

* Acts ii. 44. 47. † Ibid. 34. ‡ Ibid. v. 12, 13, 14.
 § Ibid. ii. 41. § Ibid. iv. 4.

stand by the second.* And it is more than once said, that the number of Believers increased every day: And St James, speaking to St Paul about the year 38, gives him to understand, according to the Greek text, that there were many ten thousands.† The greatest part of them were married; for perfect continency had been very rare to that time. They lodged in separate houses, since it is said, that they went from house to house to break bread; that is to say, to consecrate and distribute the Eucharist. They however lived in common, reducing their effects into money, which the Apostles first, and afterwards the seven Deacons, distributed to every one according to his wants, with such fidelity and prudence, that there were no poor among them.

Here then is a sensible and real example of that equality of goods, and having every thing in common, which the Legislators and Philosophers of antiquity had considered as the most proper means of rendering mankind happy, but without ever being able to accomplish it. This, in the earliest ages of Greece, was what Minos aimed at, when he established common tables in Crete:‡ And it was with the same view, that Lycurgus had taken so many precautions to banish luxury and riches from Lacedæmon. The Disciples of Pythagoras put all they had in a common stock, and formed an inseparable society, called in Greek, *Coinobion*,|| from

* Acts iv. 4.

† Ibid. xxi. 20.

‡ Arist. Polit. L. 2.

|| Gell. i.—8, 9.

whence.

whence comes the name of *Coenobites*.— Lastly, Plato carried this idea of having every thing in common to an excess, wishing to take away even the distinction of families. They clearly saw, that to render a society perfect, *mine* and *thine*, and all private interests must be removed out of the way: But they had nothing but penalties to constrain men to this, or reasoning to persuade them. But the grace of JESUS-CHRIST alone, can change the hearts of men, and heal the corruption of nature.

As the Jews had been better instructed by means of the law of God, so had they more perfect examples of a common life amongst them. These were the *Essenians* and *Therapeuts*. The *Essenians* were found no where but in Palestine, and their number was about four thousand.* They lived in the country, employed themselves in husbandry, and other innocent trades; living in common, and after a poor manner. The greatest part of them renounced marriage.† They applied themselves to prayer, and to the study of the Law; especially on the Sabbath-days.‡ But they held destiny, and believed in divination, and were the most superstitious of all the Jews. The *Therapeuts* were scattered about in several places; but the greatest part of them lived in Egypt, in the neighbourhood of Alexandria. They were great-

* Philo. Quod omnis probus liber, p. 876. Idem de Vit. Contempl. † Jos. Ant. l. 13, c. 9. l. 18, c. 2. ‡ Idem de Bell. c. 2.

er solitaries, and gave themselves up more to contemplation than the Essenians, employing themselves wholly in prayer, in reading and meditating on the Law. They usually eat nothing but some bread in the evening. They assembled on the Sabbath-day, and at Pentecost, to pray and eat together. More particulars may be found in Philo and in Josephus relating to the manner of life of both the one and the other of these sects. Now if men could live thus under the law which brought nothing to perfection, we are not to be surpris'd that the same virtues were practis'd, and with greater purity, under the state of grace; and this is what we see in this Church of Jerusalem, and afterwards, throughout all the other Churches, in the Monasteries and other religious Communities.

The source of this communication of goods among the Christians of Jerusalem was Charity, which made them all brethren, and united them together like one family, where all the children are maintained out of the same stock by the care of the Father, who, as he loves them all equally, suffers them to want for nothing. They had perpetually before their eyes the commandment JESUS-CHRIST had given, to *love one another*, and which he had often inculcated, especially on the night before his Passion, so as to declare his Disciples should be known from all others by that mark.* But what o-

* John xiii. 35.

obliged them to sell their inheritances and turn all into ready money, was the commandment of our Saviour to renounce all they had. This they resolved to do, not only in the disposition of heart, which is all that this precept obliges us to do, but really and actually to do so, according to that evangelical counsel: *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and come follow me.** For a person is more certain that he has no attachment to what he has really forsaken, than to what he still keeps.† They knew, moreover, that our Saviour had foretold the destruction of Jerusalem; and that he had pointed out the time of it to be, before that generation should pass away.‡ They resolved, therefore, to have nothing that could attach them to that devoted city, nor to that land which was to be laid waste.

The having therefore every thing in common amongst all the Faithful, was a practice peculiar to the Church of Jerusalem, suitable to the members thereof, and the circumstances of the times. For it seems difficult to conceive, humanly speaking, how so numerous a Church could subsist any long time without fixt funds or revenues: And we see, by the Acts of the Apostles, and St Paul's Epistles,|| that it stood in need of assistance from the other Churches; and that considerable sums were remitted from all the provinces to the Saints of Jerusalem. St Chry-

* Matt. xix. 21. † Aug. de Catech. ned. c. 23. ‡ Matt. xxiv. 34. || Acts xxiv. 17.—1. Cor. xvi. 3.

Iostome, nevertheless, so long after, was not afraid to propose this way of life, as an example which might be followed even in his time, and which would be a means of converting all the Infidels. It is probable that these Saints of Jerusalem followed some manual labour, after the example of JESUS-CHRIST and the Apostles: For we can attribute nothing to them which is too perfect; and this, besides, would have been a considerable means of supplying the want of a settled income.

It is said, that they *persevered in the doctrine of the Apostles*, and they are often called *Disciples*; the meaning of which is, that they applied themselves to the study of the doctrine of salvation, either by attending to the Apostles, who often spoke to them in public and in private, and taught them whatever they themselves had learned from the Lord; or by reading the holy Scriptures, or by discoursing thereon one with another. It is said also, that *they persevered in prayer*, and went every day to the Temple, to meet together in the porch of Solomon, and to pray there with one mind.* The instance of St Peter and St John going to the Temple at the ninth hour of prayer, makes it probable, that they, even then, observed the same hours of prayer, which the Church has ever since observed.† Outwardly, they lived like the rest of the Jews, practising all the ceremonies of the Law, and even offering

* Acts iii. hom. II. in Acts. † Baron. An. 34. p. 250.

sacrifices,* which they continued to do while the Temple stood: And this is what the Fathers call *burying the Synagogue with honour*.†

Next to prayer, the scripture takes notice of the *breaking of bread*, which means the Eucharist, as it does in several other passages of the new Testament. This Mystery was not celebrated in the Temple, where, as the Christians and the Jews were mixed together, there was not an opportunity of doing it; but it was celebrated in private houses, where none but the Faithful were present: and it was followed, like the peace-offerings, by an ordinary repast, the use of which continued, for a long time, among the Christians under the name of *Agapa*, which signifies *Charity*, or charity-feasts. It is said these meals were taken *with gladness and simplicity of heart*. And, in fact, all these Faithful were children by their humility, purity, and disinterestedness. By renouncing their possessions and all worldly hopes, they had retrenched the fuel of the passions, and the source of all the vexations of life; and were entirely taken up with the hopes of heaven, and the reign of JESUS-CHRIST, which they looked upon as near. But if we cannot read, without admiration, the little the scripture tells us of this First Church, we must not be surprized that it should be so much beloved and revered by the spectators of the virtues of its members. It subsisted at Jerusalem near forty years under the government of the Apostles, and particu-

* Acts xxi. 26.

† Aug. Ep. 19.

larly of St James, the Bishop thereof, till the Faithful, seeing the punishment of that wretched city approaching, according to the predictions of our Saviour,* they separated from the unbelieving Jews, and withdrew to the city of Pella, where they saved themselves during the siege.†

This holy tradition may be carried still further; that is to say, to the final destruction of Jerusalem under the Emperor Adrian, since we see, even to that time, that this Church, the mother of all the rest, had circumcised Bishops, and such as were Jews by origin,† from whence we may judge that the greatest part of the people were such still, and kept the legal observations. But, from that time, we find no longer any distinction, as the Jews were not permitted to dwell in the new city of *Ælia*, which Adrian built in place of it.

* Mat. xxiv. 16.

† Euf. 3. Hist. c. 3.—Epiph. hæ. 7, 29.—Item de pond. n. 20.

‡ Euf. 4. Hist. c. 5—Sev. sulp. lib. 2.



§ IV. P A R T II.

STATE of the GENTILES before their
CONVERSION.

IN the mean time other Churches, were every where forming, composed of Jews and Gentiles, who, although they fell short of that sovereign perfection above-mentioned, were, however, prodigies of virtue and sanctity; considering the state of the Gentiles before their conversion.

Such as are unacquainted with history, suppose that sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago people were more simple and plain in their manners, more innocent in their lives, and of a more docile and tractable disposition than at present, because they have been told that the world grows more and more corrupted, and because they still see remaining some marks of the openness and sincerity of our ancestors. But those who have read, with attention, the books still remaining of the Greeks and Romans, see clearly the contrary. The preaching of the Gospel began under the Empire of Claudius and Nero. We may see in Tacitus, what the Court of these Emperors was, and what vices reigned therein. The manners of the same age are likewise seen in Horace, Juvenal, Martial, and Petronius. The filth and obscenities with which these authors abound, were spoken and written in public, because people did not seek privacy to practise them;

them : and it seems as if Providence had preserved all these books, in other respects so pernicious, to shew from what an abyfs of corruption JESUS-CHRIST has withdrawn mankind.* The same abominations are to be seen in Suetonius, in the Authors of the History of Augustus, who describe the two following ages; in Lucian, Apuleius, Athenæus; in a word, in all the authors, who enter into any detail of manners. Even the Fathers of the Church have been obliged to speak pretty openly on this subject; among others, St Augustine, Tertullian, and St Clement of Alexandria.† After this we must not be astonished at the frightful list of the vices of the age which St Paul gives us in the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans.

The corruption of manners came to Rome through Greece, Egypt, and the East. We need only peep into Aristophanes, to see how far the dissoluteness of the Greeks was carried in his time : and, it is but too certain, that they did not mend afterwards; and that, from the conquests of Alexander, luxury and effeminacy made great progress amongst them. The history of the Macedonian Kings, and of those of Egypt and Syria, furnishes us with frequent examples of every species of vice, and the most monstrous debaucheries. Every body knows what a name

* Chrys. in Tit. iii. 7. hom. 3.

† Aug. Civ. 2. c. 4—Cyp. Ep. 1—Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. 2.

Alexandria, Antioch, and Corinth had: nor is it less known how famous the cities of Jonia and Asia Minor were for their voluptuousness and effeminacy. It was, however, in the midst of this corruption that Christianity took birth: it was in these very cities that the most illustrious Churches were formed. Dissoluteness of manners was not only universal throughout the whole Roman Empire, but it was also public, barefaced, authorised, and consecrated by religion. The ceremonies of Bacchus and Cybele are known to the learned. A Venus, an Adonis, a Ganymede, and all the tricks of Jupiter in disguise were every where seen. There was not a garden, which had not the Idol of the ridiculous God who presided over them all. The most common songs amongst the women were the amours of the Gods, as may be seen in Virgil, and in Ovid: * and most of their public shews were horridly obscene and cruel.

The ordinary diversions of the Roman people were to see men slaughter one another, or torn to pieces by wild beasts. Every day were slaves put to the torture for the slightest reasons, and were made to suffer the most horrible torments. The Governors of the provinces often exercised great cruelties on such as were not Romans. The Emperors put to death whomsoever they pleased, without any form of trial. Hence wicked Princes shed so much blood, even of the most illustri-

* Virg. 4. Georg.—Ovid 4. Metamorph.

ous of the Romans. In a word, their avarice was equal to their cruelty. There was nothing but fraud, perjury, falsehood, calumnies, violence, and oppression found every where. Cicero's Orations alone sufficiently prove this. If Verres, in the time of the Republic, committed so many crimes, in the space of three years, in one single province, what must the Governors have done under Caligula and Nero, when they had no apprehension of being called to an account, and were authoris'd by the example of the Prince?*. And, in fact, what did not Albinus and Florus do in Judea, and Flaccus at Alexandria? But I fear to dwell any longer on what is but too clear.

Such were those, who became the Christians, whose manners I shall endeavour to describe. When they were once *washed* and *sanctified*, there was nothing seen of what they had been before.† But I must not pass over unnoticed, the good dispositions of many among the Greeks and Romans.

In the first place, they were extremely polite; and politeness necessarily includes many good qualities, which may be called *apparent* or *outward* virtues; such as gravity, patience, mildness in conversation, complaisance, cheerfulness, lively expressions of respect and affection; and a taste for what was becoming in all things; which indeed was exquisite in the Greeks. A man, however, may have all this without solid virtue; and he may want it all, without being a bad or

* See Juven. sat. 8.

† I Cor. vi. 11.

vicious man. Virtue, however is not perfect without this exterior, which renders it more pleasing and more insinuating. Besides, there were among the Greeks several true Philosophers, that is to say, men, who in earnest, and with every effort of their reason, sought what could make them happy; and who applied their minds seriously to the knowledge of truth, and the practice of virtue, renouncing, for the sake of this study, all sorts of business, and every other view; and grudged neither expence, labour, or travelling, to accomplish their end.* The Romans were not so generally corrupted, but that they still retained something of that greatness of soul, resolution, and those other virtues which shone forth with such lustre in their ancestors.

The Grace of the Gospel coming upon these happy natural dispositions, could not fail of producing very great effects. St Cornelius, the first of the Gentiles who received this grace, was an officer in the Roman army. The Roman magnanimity appears in several illustrious martyrs, such as St Lawrence, St Vincent, and St Sebastian: And in several great Bishops, such as St Cyprian, St Ambrose, and St Leo. With respect to the gravity of the Greek Philosophers, it may be seen in the Acts of St Polycarp, in those of St Pionius, Priest of Smyrna, and the writings of St Justin, and those of St Clement of Alexandria: And in all these we

* Justin Dial. cum. Tryph. init.

find a most profound erudition, joined with the most exquisite politeness of style and manners. When Christian humility had corrected the haughtiness of the Roman, and the pride of the Philosopher, it made them true Sages: And when they had once learned by Faith the goal they were to make for, they fixed their eyes on nothing else. These men, so able and so subtle, when once become chaste and disinterested, became likewise calm and simple, with that noble simplicity which despises all artifice and disguise.

Thus was the Christian Religion established in the heart of the Roman Empire, and in the heart of Rome itself, when in its most flourishing state, and in the most enlightened age that ever was; and, at the same time, the most corrupted. The Divinity of the Gospel could never shine out with greater lustre, than when it triumphed over the two dispositions of human nature the most opposite to it. Science and elevation of mind opposed the simplicity of the Christian doctrine, and the humility of Faith. Depravity of heart and corruption of manners were averse to its purity and severity of morals. This reflection must be attended to, that nobody may imagine the Apostles had to deal with only a set of ignorant people, and such as were easily persuaded.* Tertullian knew how to make the Heathens take notice of this: "JESUS-CHRIST", says he, "did not

* Aug. Ep. 37. ad Volus. n. 16.—Ep. 138. ad Marcell. n. 17.—22. Civ. c. 7.—De Vocat. Gen. i. ii. 15.

“act like Numa, who civilized, in some degree, a set of rough and savage people, by confounding them with a multiplicity of Deities, whom he proposed as beings they were to render propitious: But, finding them already instructed and corrupted by their own polished state, he opened their eyes to see the truth.”*

§ V. PART II.

INSTRUCTION.—BAPTISM.

THE method followed in preaching the Gospel was different, according to the different dispositions of those to whom it was preached. The Jews were convinced by the Prophecies, by other proofs drawn from Scripture, and their own Traditions. The Gentiles were persuaded by reasoning more simple and plain, or more subtle and acute, according to their capacities; and by the authority of their Poets and their Philosophers.† Miracles roused the attention of both. The Acts of the Apostles furnish us with instances of all these ways of instructing.‡ They never spoke on divine subjects, but to such as hearkened to them with a serious attention, and quietly. As soon as the Unbelievers began to be vexed or to make a jest of what was said, which often happened, the Christian was silent, to

* Tert. Apol. c. 2. † Ambr. in Luc. ix. 21. l. 6. c. ult.

‡ Acts ii. 15. iii. 13, 25. xiii. 16. xiv. 14. xvii. 28.

prevent the profanation of what was holy, or giving any occasion to blasphemy.* In time, some writings were published to shew the Heathens how groundless their religion was, and to remove their prejudices against the Christian Religion. Of this nature was Clement of Alexandria's *Admonition to the Gentiles*; the three books of Autolychus; the Treatise of Tatian against the Greeks. But what brought the greatest number over, were the Miracles, which were still frequent, the holy lives of the Christians, and their constancy in suffering martyrdom.

When any one requested to become a Christian, he was brought to the Bishop, or to some one of the Priests, who first examined if his vocation was solid and sincere; for they were afraid of profaning the mysteries of Religion, by intrusting them to such as were unworthy; and of loading the Church with weak and fickle members, capable of dishonouring it by their fall in the very first persecution that should break out. When, therefore, any one presented himself, he was examined about the motives of his conversion, his state and condition of life, if he were a freeman or a slave, or if he had formerly been a slave? What was his present conduct, and what had been his past life? Such as were engaged in any criminal profession, or any other habit of sin, were not admitted, till they had effectually renounced their profession, and quitted their vicious

* Just. Dial. cum Tryph.

habits.* † Thus they rejected all common prostitutes; and such as made a trade of them; † stage-players, gladiators, runners in the circus, such as entertained the people with their dancing and singing; in a word, all such as had any thing to do with the public shews, or frequented them. They rejected also mountebanks, enchanters, fortune-tellers: Such as gave characters to cure or prevent certain diseases, or who made a trade of any other kind of superstition. None of these were received till they had laid aside their evil practices, nor did they trust them, without trying them for some time.—A zeal for the conversion of souls did not make the Christians more easy in receiving such as wanted to join them.

He who was judged fit to become a Christian, was made a Catechumen by the imposition of the hands of the Bishop, or of a Priest appointed by him, who marked him on the forehead with the sign of the Cross; praying to God at the same time, that the person might benefit by the instructions he was going to receive, and render himself worthy to arrive at holy baptism. He assisted at the public sermons, to which even the Infidels were admitted: But, besides this, there were Catechists, who watched over the conduct of the Catechumens, and taught them, in private, the elements of Faith; but, without explaining, to the bottom, the myste-

* † Const. Apost. 8. c. 32. Aug. de serm.

† Conc. Ellib. can. 62.

ries of which they were not as yet capable. The chief instructions given them regarded their moral duties, that they might know what their life was to be, after their baptism. These instructions, with regard to morals, are the subject of the *Paedagogue* of Clement, who succeeded the Philosopher Pantænus in the school of Alexandria; that is, in the employment of instructing such as were desirous of becoming Christians. Origen succeeded him, and afterwards procured the assistance of St Heraclas, allotting to him immediately the charge of giving the first instructions.*

The Catechumenate usually lasted two years; but it was lengthened, or shortened according to the progress the Catechumen made.† Attention was paid not only to his learning the doctrine taught him, but to the amendment of his morals: And he continued in this state, until his conversion was rendered complete.‡ Hence many put off their baptism to their death: for it was never given to any but to such as desired it, and asked for it; though all others were often exhorted to ask for it. Those who asked for baptism, and were judged worthy to receive it, gave in their names at the beginning of Lent, to be written down in the list of the *Competents*, or *Enlightened*.|| Thus there were two orders of Catechumens; the *Hearers* and the *Competents*. These latter fasted Lent like the

* Euf. Hist. 6. c. 15. † Conc. Elib. c. 42. ‡ Orig. in Luc. hom. 2. || Orig. in Cels. l. 3. p. 142.

Faithful, and joined with their fasts frequent prayer, genuflexions, watching, and the confession of their sins.* During this time, they were more thoroughly instructed, by having the Symbol or Creed explained to them, and particularly the mysteries of the Trinity and of the Incarnation. They were often brought to the Church to be examined, and to have Exorcisms and prayers said over them, in the presence of the Faithful. This was called the *Scrutiny*, which continued to be observed for several ages, even with regard to little children; and there still remain some footsteps of it in the Church-service, particularly in the Mass of Wednesday in the fourth week of Lent, in which is read the Gospel of the man born blind.

At the end of Lent they were taught the Lord's Prayer, and instructed, in a succinct manner, concerning the sacraments they were going to receive, and which were to be explained, more at large, afterwards. This order of instruction is clearly seen in the *Catecheses* of St Cyril of Jerusalem, in the Letter of the Deacon Ferrandus to St Fulgentius, relating to the baptism of the Ethiopian.† Those who, after all these trials, were found worthy of baptism, were called *Elect*, and were baptized on Easter-Eve, that they might rise again with JESUS-CHRIST: Or on Whitsun-Eve, that they might receive the holy Ghost with the Apostles; for Con-

* Tert. de Bapt. c. 19, 20. † Ap. Fulg. Ep. 11. p. 214.

firmation was given them at the same time. Regularly speaking, baptism was administered only on these two solemnities. St Leo condemns the practice of the Bishops of Sicily, who baptized at the Epiphany:*—And this rule continued to be observed as low down as the tenth century.†—But those who were in danger, as on the breaking out of a persecution, were baptized at any time.

The day appointed for baptism being come, the Catechumen was led to the Baptistry: There he was made to renounce the Devil and his pomps.‡. He was questioned about the Faith, and he answered by repeating the Apostles' Creed. Baptism was usually administered by immersion;|| the person to be baptized was dipped over head three times; and, at each time, one of the three persons of the holy Trinity was named. Baptism by aspersion or sprinkling, was however judged sufficient in cases of necessity, such as that of the sick:§ But the common people gave the name of *Clinics* to such as had been thus baptized in bed. The children of the Faithful were baptized as soon as their parents presented them, without even waiting till they were eight days old; and the God-father and God-mother answered for them.¶ But all the new baptized were called *Children*, whatever their age might be. With baptism was joined the unction of oil blessed on the altar. The per-

* Ep. 4. † Conc. Tibur. an. 895. c. 12. ‡ Tert. Bapt. c. 19, 20. Id. de cor. 2, 3. Cap. Ep. 70. ad Jan. || Tert. in Prax. c. 6, 26. § Cyp. Ep. 69. al. 76. ad Magn. ¶ Id. Ep. 64. ad Fidum.

sons baptized, were presented to the Bishop, and, by his prayers, and the laying on of his hands, they received the holy Ghost, that is to say, the Sacrament of Confirmation.* But such as died without this sacrament, were nevertheless considered as true Believers.† The new baptized had milk and honey given them, to signify their entrance into the true land of promise, and their spiritual infancy.‡ It was the first food given to children when weaned. During the first week the Neophytes wore the white robe they had received at coming from the font, to signify the innocency which they were to preserve until death: And during this week they refrained from the ordinary bath, used every day in hot countries. It does not appear that the adults, or such as were grown up, changed their names;|| since we see a great many Saints, whose names were taken from the false Gods: such as *Dionysius*; *Martinus*, *Demetrius*. But as to the children, they chose to give them the name of the Apostles, or other pious names taken from some virtue, or point of Faith; as in Greek, *Eusebius*, *Eustachius*, *Hesychius*, *Gregorius*, *Athanasius*: In Latin, *Pius*, *Virgilius*, *Fidus*, *Sperantius*, and others, which became so common after the establishment of Christianity. The new baptized were as-

* Tert de Bapt. c. 18. † Cyp. Ep. 70. ad Jan.—Id. Ep. 73. ad Jubaian.—Tert. de Resur. corn. c. 8. ‡ Corn. de Bapt. hær. ad Cyp.—Tert. de cor. c. 3 & 1 in Marc. c. 14. de cor. c. 3. || Dion. Alex. ap. Euf. 8. c. 20.

sisted by those who had presented them to baptism, and by the Priests, who kept a watchful eye over them for a long while after, in order to train them up in the Christian life.

§ VI.—P R A Y E R.

THEY began therefore now to lead a new life, wholly interior and supernatural, and to find that they could now do with ease, what they before had thought impossible. Their first and chief occupation was prayer; which St Paul also recommends in the first place.* And as he exhorts to pray without ceasing, according to the precept of JESUS-CHRIST, they employed all sorts of means not to interrupt, unless the least that was possible, the application of their minds to God, and to heavenly things. They met to pray in common, the oftenest they possibly could,† being persuaded, that the more there were joined together in begging the same favours of God, the more efficacious would their prayers be towards obtaining them, according to the declaration of our Saviour: *If two of you shall agree upon earth, concerning any thing whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together*

* 1. Tim. ii. 1.—1. Thess. v. 17. † Ign. Ep. ad Eph. & al.—Text. Apol. c. 39.

*in my name, there am I in the midst of them.** St Ignatius recommends to St Polycarp frequently to assemble the Faithful, and exhorts him to see that all be present, by calling upon each by his name. Moreover, the presence of the Pastor gives more authority to these prayers, and the people are roused to devotion by mutual examples of fervor and modesty of behaviour.

The public Prayers at which they most frequently assisted, were those of the morning and evening, or what we now call *Lauds* and *Vespers*. They were exhorted thus to consecrate the beginning and close of the day, and not to excuse themselves therefrom on account of their temporal concerns, which ought to be considered as only secondary to those that are spiritual.† The Morning Prayer, which we call *Lauds* on account of the psalms of *Praise* we sing therein, seems to have succeeded to the morning sacrifice of the old law. It is still one of the most solemn parts of the service, as appears from the Commemorations, the lights and incense. Vespers have succeeded to the evening sacrifice, and are appointed to sanctify the beginning of the night. They were sometimes called *Lucernarium*, or the Prayer at lamp-lighting, because it was the hour at which people began to light their lamps; and we still sing some hymns, which mention the light and the supper which followed

* Matt. xviii. 19, 20. † Const. Apost. c. 59.

this prayer.* The kiss of peace was usually given after public Prayer. Such who could not be present, as the sick, the imprisoned, people on a journey, met in private, the most they possibly could; and though they were alone, they failed not to pray at the appointed hours.†

Besides Lauds and Vespers, they prayed also at *Terce*, at *Sext*, at *None*, and in the *Night*. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and St Cyprian expressly mention all these prayers, and ground the use of them on examples taken from the Old Testament, and alledge mysterious reasons for them. Origen requires that every one should pray, at least, thrice a day: In the morning, at noon, in the evening; and even in the night. They turned towards the East to pray; and their ordinary posture was raising up their heads, and stretching out their hands towards heaven.‡ The hours of Prayer were reckoned after the Roman manner, who divided the day, from sun-rising to sun-setting, into twelve hours, equal in each day, but unequal, according as the days were shorter or longer.|| The night was likewise divided into twelve hours, and into four parts, which were called *Watches* or *Stations*: Because,

* See the old Hymns. *O Lux beata Trinitas.—Lucis Creator Optime.—Conditor alme Siderum.—Vergente mundi Vespere.—Ad Canam Agni providi.*

† Tert. de Orat. c. 13. ‡ V. Baron. an. 34. n. 251. —Const. Apost. l. 8. c. 34, 35.—Clem. Alex. Strom. Tert. adv. Psych. c. 10.—Cyp. de Or. Dom.—Orig. de Or. c. 33. || Clem. 7. Strom. p. 724.—Mart 4. Epig. 8.

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in the time of war, the centinels were relieved only four times. Thus to regulate ourselves by the Equinox, *Prime*, or the *First* hour, was from six to seven: *Terce*, or the *Third* hour, began at nine: *Sext*, or the *Sixth* hour, at noon, or mid-day: *None*, or the *Ninth* hour, at three in the afternoon: The *Twelfth* hour, or the evening, at six in the afternoon: So that, during the day, they prayed every three hours.

They even rose to pray at midnight, on the authority of the Psalm, and after the example of St Paul, when in prison, having been scourged with Silas. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen, mention this midnight prayer; St Cyprian recommends it; and this custom of getting up in the night to pray is recommended by all the Fathers, as of great use to mortify the body, and for raising the mind to God at a time the most quiet and free from disturbance. It was even recommended to employ the intervals of sleep in meditating on the Psalms and the Lord's Prayer.* They also recommended the repeating of the Creed every morning, and on every occasion of danger.†

In a word, to renew more frequently their attention to the presence of God, and to draw, as near as possible, to the practice of continual prayer; they said some particular

* Baron. an. 52. n. 68, &c.---Ps. lviii. 62.---Acts xvi. 25.---Clem. 7. Strom. 2.---Pædag. c. 9.---Tert. ad Uxor. c. 4.---Cyp. de Or. Chrys. hom. 26. in Act. xxx. 14. in Ep. ad Rom.

† Ang. hom. 42. Ambr. l. 3. de Virg. pray-

prayers before every thing they did, according to the precept of St Paul: *Whatsoever you do in word and in work, do all in the name of the Lord JESUS-CHRIST, giving thanks to God and the Father through him.** Thus all their husbandry labours, such as ploughing, sowing their corn, harvest, and gathering in the fruits of the earth, began and ended with prayer. They prayed when they began to build a house, or to dwell in it; to make a new piece of stuff, or any part of their clothes, or to wear them; and so of all others, even the most ordinary actions. We see instances of these prayers in several of the benedictions still retained in the Rituals. The salutation at the beginning of a letter, and on other occasions, was not only an expression of friendship, but also a Prayer.† On occasion of the least thing they did, they made use of the sign of the Cross, as of a still shorter formulary of benediction. They marked it on their foreheads, and used it almost every moment; that is to say, whenever they came in, or went out, when they walked, when they sat down, when they rose up, when they went to bed, when they dressed themselves, or put on their shoes, when they eat or drank, &c.‡ In times of temptation, they added to it, the sufflation, or a blowing with their mouth, to drive away the Devil.||

* Coloss. iii. 17. † Chrys. hom. 5 in Ep. ad Thess.

‡ Tert. de Cor. c. 2. — Cyril. Hier. Cat. 4. de Ax. & 13. || Tert. ad Uxor. c. 5,

§ VII.—Study of the sacred SCRIPTURES.

WHAT made up the bulk of their prayers were always the Psalms, which, when pronounced slowly and distinctly, were very instructive, as they include and epitomize whatever the other sacred books contain, and afford models of the sentiments a good man ought to have in all the different states of life.* Some Lessons out of the other sacred books were always joined with them, and from hence came the *Little Chapters* of the canonical hours. As the midnight Prayers were the longest, they were accompanied with more Lessons: And as the Mass was the most solemn part of the whole service, so also more instructions were given in that part. They read nothing as scripture, but what was in the *Canon*; that is to say, those books only, which the constant Tradition of the Churches authorized: And they called *Apocryphal*, that is, hidden or obscure, such as some private persons wanted to add to them.† Lest the ecclesiastical books should be corrupted by the rashness of transcribers, they sometimes added a protestation, in which, whoever should transcribe the book, was conjured by the judgment of God, to do it faithfully. St Irenæus did so at the end of his Letter to Florinus:‡ And of the same nature is the threat

* Athan. Ep. ad Marcel.

† V. Orig. ad Afric.

P. 219. & in Matt. 33. hom. 26.

‡ Eus. 20. hist.

we see at the end of the Revelation of St John.*

The Church was not only the house of Prayer, but the school of salvation. The Bishop explained the Gospel and the other sacred books, with the assiduity of a Professor or Master, though with more authority: From whence, in the style of the ancients, the name of *Doctor* or *Teacher*, was rarely given to any others than to the Bishops. They gave instructions both in public, when all the Faithful were assembled together, and from house to house, as St Paul says he did.† And they accommodated their instructions to the people whom they had to instruct, as St Paul observes in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus. They made a profession of saying nothing of their own heads, of avoiding all curious questions, and of seeking nothing after the Gospel, but faithfully to relate what they had learned from their Fathers, that is; from the more ancient Bishops and Priests, by a Tradition which went up to the Apostles. They inspired the Faithful with an extreme horror of all novelties, especially in doctrine; so that if any of the common Faithful heard any thing said contrary to the faith they had been taught, they did not amuse themselves with contradicting it, leaving that to their Pastors; but they stopped their ears and went away.‡ Hence

* Apoc. xxii. 18. † Acts xx. 20. ‡ Ign. Ep. ad Polycarp.---Tert. Prescr. c. 8.---Iren. ad Flor. ap Euf. v. hist. 20.---Clem. Alex. 1. Strom.---Pap. ap. Euf. hist. 3. c. 38.---S. Iren. lib. 3. c. 4. & ap. Euf. v. hist. 20. Ign. Ep. ad Trall. & al.

so many heresies, which arose in the first ages, were, for the greatest part, condemned without assembling any Councils, or formal sentences passed against them, at least that we know of. The Catholic Pastors all agreed in the common Tradition, and the people continued inviolably attached to their doctrine.

The Faithful likewise studied, each at home, the law of God, and meditated on it night and day. They read over again in their own houses what they had heard in the Church, and imprinted on their memories the explications of the Pastor, by discoursing thereon one with another: Above all, the Fathers took care to repeat them in their families; for each Father was, in his own family, as it were, a private Pastor.* He presided at the family Prayers and reading: He instructed his wife, his children, and his servants; made them familiar exhortations, and brought them up in the communion of the Church, by the perfect submission which he himself shewed to his Pastor. What I here say of Fathers, is also to be understood of Mothers. St Basil and St Gregory of Nyssa, his brother, gloried in preserving the faith they had learnt from their Grand-mother, St Macrina, who had been instructed by St Gregory Thaumaturgus;† and there seem to apply to themselves the eulogium St Paul bestows on the faith of

* Const. Apost. 4. c. 16. — † Bas. Ep. 64. 73. 79.—
Greg. Vit. Marc. jun.

the Mother and Grandmother of St Timothy.* One mark of the great care Fathers and Mothers took to instruct their families is, that we do not see, in all antiquity, the least footsteps of any Catechism for children, or any sort of public instruction for such as had been baptized before they came to the use of reason. Every private house was then, says St Chrysostome, a Church.†

Many of the Christians, even among the Laity, knew the whole scripture by heart;—with such assiduity did they read it. They commonly carried it about with them, and many Saints have been found buried with the Gospel on their breasts. St Chrysostome‡ assures us that, in his time, several women wore it hanging at their necks: that they washed their hands before they took up the sacred books to read: that each one composed his exterior: that the men were bare-headed; and that the women, out of respect, covered themselves with their veils. For they read the scripture no less than the men. We see some holy women, Martyrs, who, in the persecution of Dioclesian, being obliged to abandon every thing, and retire into caverns, regretted only the loss of the sacred books, which they had not then the comfort of studying night and day, as before.||

The Christian reads also the writings of the

* 2 Tim. i. 5. † Hom. 36. in Ep. ad Cor.

‡ In Matt. hom. 72.—in Joan. hom. 53. Mor.

|| Act. 11. Agapes, &c.

Bishops and other Ecclesiastical authors: for there were a great many famous ones even in these first ages. Eusebius gives us the names of about forty, besides those who had not put their names to their works, or of whom he speaks only in general terms. It is true, we have lost the greatest part of these works: and the greatest part of the Bishops were hindered from writing books, either through humility, a fear of divulging the mysteries, their great occupations, and the persecutions, which did not allow them to live long.* But they had still letters to write on different occasions, and to defend the Christian Religion against the heretics and the heathens. There were, moreover, so many learned men, both Philosophers and Orators throughout the whole empire, especially in Greece and in the East, that there was always a great number of good writers among the Christians.

It was recommended to the Faithful to refrain from reading the books of the heathens, as they might overturn the faith of the weak, and were of no use. "For what is there wanting to you in the law of God," says an ancient writer? "If you choose history, you have the book of Kings: if you choose Philosophy and Poetry, you have the Prophets, Job, and the Proverbs, where you will find more sense and wit than in all the Poets and Philosophers, since they are the words of God himself,

* Ex. script. electa n. 27. Post. Clem. Alex.

“who alone is wise: if you love songs,
 “you have the Psalms: if you are fond of
 “antiquities, you have Genesis: in a word,
 “the law of God furnishes you with pre-
 “cepts and salutary advice.”* The Bishops,
 however, and the Priests read profane books,
 and made use of them to attack the heathens
 by the authority of their own Poets and Philo-
 sophers. They openly professed to embrace
 every truth wherever they found it, as being
 their own property, since they were the
 Disciples of JESUS-CHRIST, who is the
 Word, *Logos*, that is the supreme Reason.†
 Origen, with advantage, made use of all
 the human sciences to draw over people of
 sense to Religion.

§ VIII.—EMPLOYMENTS. OCCUPA-
 TIONS. PROFESSIONS.

IT was to the rich, in a particular manner,
 that the constant reading of the scriptures
 was recommended, in order to keep them
 from idleness and curiosity. The others
 followed some trade to enable them to
 gain their bread, to pay their debts, and to
 give alms: ‡ but they chose such trades as
 were the most innocent, and the most com-
 patible with their retired and humble way

* Const. Apost. I. 6.

† Clem. Alex. I. Strom. Greg. Thaum. in Or. p. 55.

‡ Const. Apost. I. 4.

of life. Many, even among the rich, reduced themselves to a voluntary poverty, by distributing what they had among the poor: and this they did, particularly in the time of persecution, to prepare themselves for Martyrdom. The first disciples of the Apostles, who laboured after them in the propagation of the Gospel, did the same from a still more sublime motive. They sold their possessions, and gave the price to the poor, that they might be more at liberty to go and preach the Faith every where in the most distant countries.* Several of the Christians used manual labour merely to avoid idleness; for it was strongly recommended to them to shun this vice among others, and those which are the most inseparable from it, such as restlessness, curiosity, detraction, useless visits, taking the air, and prying into the behaviour of others. On the contrary, every one was exhorted to remain quiet and in silence at home, employed in some useful work, principally in the acts of charity towards the sick, poor, and all others who stood in need of help.†

The life of a Christian was therefore a perpetual succession of prayer, reading, and work, at regular hours, which were interrupted as little as possible, by the necessities of life. But whatever employments they engaged in,

* Euf. 3. list. 37.

† Thef. iii. 6, &c.—Cass. de Spir. Aced. c. 7—Const.

Apost. I. 4. c. 2. ult.—Clem. Alex. Pædag. 3. c. 10.

they considered them only as secondary concerns to Religion, which they looked upon as the principal and only business, which ought to take up their thoughts during their whole life. What they professed was to be purely and simply CHRISTIANS: they assumed to themselves no other qualification: and, when interrogated by the Judges concerning their name, their country, their rank in life, their only answer was: I AM A CHRISTIAN.*

They liked not those professions, which engage and dissipate the mind too much; such as trade and commerce, following the law, or public employments. They continued, however, in the employments in which they were engaged before their baptism, provided they had nothing in them inconsistent with piety and religion.† Hence the military were not obliged to quit the service, when they became Christians;‡ they were only obliged to observe the rule laid down for them in the Gospel, to be content with their pay, and use no violence or fraud towards any one.¶ The number of Christian soldiers was great;§ witness the *Thundering Legion* in the time of Marcus Aurelius, and the *Thebean Legion*, the whole of which suffered Martyrdom, with their Tribune, St Mauritius, under Maximinus Herculus.¶

* Const. Apost. 2. 62. 63. † Orig. in Cels. 8.—1 Cor. vii. 20. ‡ Tert. de cor. c. 21. ¶ Luke iii. 14.
§ Tert. Apol. c. 37. ¶ Act. Mart. Thebæor. ap. Bar. an. 297.

The military discipline of the Romans, which was still kept up, consisted chiefly in a frugal and laborious way of living, and in obedience and patience: virtues to the practice of which the Christians were well accustomed. They, however, sometimes shunned the service, or even quitted it when engaged therein, that they might take no share in the superstitious practices of the heathens; such as eating meats sacrificed to idols, adoring their standards, on which idols were represented; swearing by the genius of the Emperor, and crowning themselves with garlands in the profane pomps.*

§ IX.—F A S T S.

THE Christians fasted more frequently than the Jews, but the manner of fasting was much the same, including the natural marks and signs of grief and affliction. The essential point was to eat only once in the day, and that towards the evening; that is to say, to take only a supper; to abstain from wine and the more dainty and nourishing foods; and spend the day in retirement and prayer. The book of *The Pastor*, so much respected by the ancients, says, that on that day, people ought to begin from the

* Act. S. Marcel. ib. an. 298.—Tert. de cor.

morning

morning to retire to prayer: that they ought to take nothing but bread and water, and give to the poor what they would otherways spend more than that.* In fact, alms were always joined with fasting; and fasting itself enabled them to give alms, by retrenching a part of the ordinary expences of the table. Drinking out of meal-time was considered as a breach of the fast. St Fructuosus, Bishop of Taragona, as he was going to Martyrdom, refused a strengthening draught that was offered him, saying, that the hour for breaking his fast was not yet come.† This was on a Friday, at ten o'clock in the morning. In the first ages none were considered as fasts of obligation under the new law, but those that preceded Easter, that is to say, Lent.‡ The Church observed these fasts in memory of the passion of JESUS-CHRIST;|| thus applying what he had said, that she would fast when the bridegroom was taken away.§ There were other fasts, but they were only fasts of devotion; such as Wednesday in each week;¶ fasts appointed by the Bishops on extraordinary necessities of the Church; and such as people imposed on themselves out of private devotion. The fast of Wednesday and Friday, otherwise the *fourth* and *sixth feria*, was called *Station*: a name taken from the soldiers standing

* Tert. de jejun. c. 13.

† Conf. Apost. 5. c. 18. ‡ Mat. ix. 15—Mark xi. 20.

|| Simil. 5. 11. § Act. S. Fruct. ¶ Tert. de jejun. c. 2.

centinel, and often given to other fasts of devotion. The fast on these two days was also grounded on the passion of JESUS-CHRIST, because on Wednesday a council was held against him, and on Friday he was put to death.*

These fasts were different, and they reckoned three sorts of them. The fasts of Station, which lasted only until none, so that they took their meal at three o'clock in the afternoon: these were also called *half-fasts*. The fast of Lent, which lasted until Vespers, that is about six o'clock in the afternoon and sunset,† The Double or increased fast, *superpositio*, in which the whole day was passed without eating at all.‡ It was thus they fasted on holy Saturday; some added the Friday thereto. Others fasted thus three days together; others four; others all the six days of holy-week, without taking any food whatever, each one according to his strength.¶ This double fast was kept in Spain every Saturday, and one day in each month, except July and August.§ The reason for fasting until none was to honour the hour of the death of JESUS-CHRIST, and until Vespers to honour his burial.¶

The Degrees of abstinence were likewise

* Ep. can. Pet. Alex. c. 15.

† V. Vales. not. in Euf. 5. hist. c. 24.

‡ Cang. Gloss. v. superpos.

¶ Ep. can. Dion. Alex. T. 1. Conc. p. 832.

§ Conc. Elib. c. 23. 26. ¶ Tert. de jejun. c. 19.

different.

different. Some kept the *Homophagia*, or eat nothing that had been dressed at the fire: others kept the *Xerophagia*, that is to say, they contented themselves with dried meats, abstaining not only from flesh and wine, but also from all vinous or juicy fruits, eating, with their bread, only nuts, almonds, and such-like dry fruits: others contented themselves with bread and water.* The *Xerophagia* was particularly recommended in the time of persecution, as a preparation for martyrdom.† Some even, besides holy-week, spent several days without eating, and, sometimes, *ten suns together*, as Lucian expresses it, who was an unexceptionable witness in this point;‡ for, in these continual fasts, they included even the Sundays, on which, regularly speaking, it was not lawful to fast.¶

I know such instances of so rigorous a fast make little impression on us now-a-days. People persuade themselves that these ancient austerities are no longer practicable. Human nature, say they, is become weaker than it was so many ages since: the life of man is shorter: his constitution is not so robust. But I could wish to see some proofs of this alteration in man. For I am not here speaking of the heroic times of Greece, nor of the lives of the Patriarchs, or of the Antediluvians: but I speak of the times of the

* Id. de jejun. c. 13.

† Id. ib. c. 9.—Iren. ap. Euf. c. 24.

‡ Lucian in Philopatr.

¶ Pet. Alexan. c. 15.

first Roman Emperors, and of the best known Greek and Latin writers. Examine them as much as you please, you will not find in them, that the life of man has been any way shortened for these sixteen or seventeen hundred years past.* At that time, and long before, the life of man was usually confined to seventy or eighty years.† In the first ages of Christianity, though there were still some Greeks and Romans who used the gymnastic exercises to acquire health and strength of body, there was still a greater number who weakened their constitution by excess of debauchery, particularly of that kind which is most destructive of health, and which causes many of the Levantines to grow old at present, at so early a period of life. Nevertheless, from among these debauchees of Egypt and Syria came the greatest fasters, and these great fasters lived longer than other men. In hot countries, it is true, fasting is less troublesome; but we meet with great instances of abstinence in Gaul, and in still colder countries; and this, above a thousand years after the Apostles; for the ancient rule of fasting continued to St Bernard's time, as we shall see hereafter.

* The date of the Great Bossuet's approbation of this book is Feb. 28, 1782.—And the Newspapers, almost every week, give us more instances of longevity than we meet with in the period of history mentioned by the author.

† Ps. lxxxix. 10.

The

The Christians, as well as the Jews, considered fasting as a state of affliction. The Jews, it is true, fasted, sometimes, to indulge a natural grief occasioned by the loss of some one who was dear to them, or by some other misfortune purely temporal. Other nations did the same; and we find the like marks of mourning among the Greeks and Romans. But the Christians, who applied every thing to what was of a spiritual concern, employed these exterior marks of affliction, to excite in themselves that sorrow which worketh salvation, that is to say, compunction for their sins.* St Cyprian would have a Christian weep for the death of his soul as much, at least, as he would for the loss of a person dear to him:† and St Chrysostome makes use of the same comparison.‡ They considered fasting moreover as a means of preventing temptations, by weakening the body, and subjecting it to the mind. One consequence therefore of fasting, was to withdraw from the enjoyment of all sorts of pleasures, even the most lawful. Married people lived in continency at those times. All lived more retired, observed a stricter silence, assisted with more assiduity at Church, and prayed and read a great deal more.

* 2 Cor. vii. 10. † Cyp. de Lapf. ‡ De Compunct.

§ X.—M E A L S.

BUT, to say nothing of their fasts, the Meals of the Christians were always accompanied with frugality and modesty. The principle recommended to them was, *not to live for the sake of eating, but to eat for the sake of living.* It is the principle laid down by St Clement of Alexandria, who says that a Christian ought to eat no more than is necessary for the support of his health, and for keeping up the degree of strength necessary for his labour.* He says he ought to renounce all exquisite dishes, the setting out of grand entertainments, and whatever requires the art of cookery. They took, in a literal sense, and as a general rule, what St Paul says: *It is good not to eat flesh, and not to drink wine.*† Refraining from wine was chiefly recommended to women and to young people: And such as drank it at all, always mixed a good deal of water with it.‡ If they eat any animal food, they preferred fish or fowl to the grosser flesh of four-footed beasts, which they esteemed too succulent and too nourishing: But they constantly refrained from blood and strangled meats, according to the decision of the Council of the Apostles,|| and which was observed for several ages. Many therefore lived only on white-meats, fruit, and pulse. Besides this, they thought even some pulse, such as pease, beans, and lentils,

* Pædag. 2. c. i. † Rom. xiv. 21. ‡ Hier. ad. Fulgentium. — Clem. 1. Pædag. 2. || Acts xv. 29. — Min. Fel.

too nourishing for those who wished entirely to tame their flesh. They reduced even the pulse they made use of to plain herbs, with bread and water,* taking again in a literal sense this passage of St Paul: *He that is weak, let him eat herbs.*† It is observed of St Matthew the Apostle, that he lived only on herbs, the tender buds of trees, and berries.

It is true, this abstemious way of life was not so extraordinary then, as it would appear now. Though the luxury of the table had come to an excessive height, as may be seen in the Greek and Latin authors of this time, particularly in Athenæus, it was not arrived at the pitch it is at present with us. The Egyptians and several other nations still observed their superstitious abstinences. The abstinence of the Pythagoreans was held in great esteem, as appears from the instance of Appollonius of Tyana, and the writings of Porphyry. Horace, as great an Epicurean as he was, reckons pulse and herbs his ordinary food; and promises his friend, when he invites him to supper, nothing more.‡ The Emperor Augustus most commonly lived on brown-bread, cheese, figs, dates, or raisins, and small fishes.§ A thousand other like instances are to be found. It was usual to make only one full meal a day, and that in the evening, when they had dispatched all their business, and every body was got

* Clem. Alex. 2 Pædag. c. 1. † Rom. xiv. 2.

‡ Inde domum me ad porri et ciceris refero, laganique catinum. Lib. 1. sat.—Nec modicâ canare times olus omne patellâ. Ep. 5.—§ Suet. in Aug.

home. This was their supper, or *Cena*. What they called *Prandium*, was rather a breakfast than a dinner, in our language; since it was only a slight refreshment; to support them during the day: And several did not even take that.* It is reckoned among the excesses of Vitellius, that he often made four meals a day, and always three.†

The Christians lived at least like the wisest and best among the Heathens; and consequently used only a plain diet: And they preferred that food which required no dressing at the fire, to that which did.‡ They made, at most, only two meals a day, absolutely condemning, according to the doctrine of the Apostles, those collations after supper, called *Commessations*, which occasioned the nights to be spent in debauchery and excess.¶ The repast, however simple and plain, was preceded and followed by long prayers, of which we have still a formulary in the Prayers of the Church before and after meals. Prudentius made two hymns for this purpose, in which the spirit of the first ages is well expressed.§

It was an usual practice in those times to have reading during the meal. Pliny never failed to have it:¶ and Juvenal, inviting one of his friends to sup with him, promises to have Homer and Virgil read.**

* *Pransus non avidé, quantum interpellat inani ventre diem durare. Hor. I. Sat. 6.* † Suet. in Vitellio. c. 13. ‡ Clem Alex. *Pædag.* II. c. 1. ¶ Gal. v. 21. —Rom. xiii. 13.—I. Pet. 14. 3. § Cathmer. 3, 4. ¶ Plin. 3. Ep. 5.—** Sat. II.

The Christians had the holy Scriptures read, and sung spiritual canticles, and grave tunes, instead of the profane songs and buffooneries, with which the Heathens accompanied their entertainments: For they did not condemn either Music or Mirth, provided it was holy, and had God for its object. They did not eat either with heretics or other excommunicated persons; nor even with the Catechumens: But they sometimes eat with the Heathens,* not to break off all society with them.

§ XI.—*Modesty and serious Deportment of the Christians.*

THE Christians behaved with the same modesty and reserve in every action of life. They valued only interior greatness and nobility; they esteemed only spiritual riches. They condemned whatever luxury had introduced amidst the prodigious riches of the Roman Empire; such as expensive buildings and costly furniture, viz. tables of ivory, silver bedsteads, coverlets of purple stuffs and of gold, wrought plate of gold and silver, set with precious stones.† Here follows the furniture the Persecutors found in the chamber wherein St Domna, a very rich Virgin of Nicomedia, lived, shut up with the Eunuch, St Indus:—A Cross, the Acts of the Apostles, two mats on the floor, an earthen lamp, a small wooden box, in

* 1. Cor. v. 9. Ib. x. 27. † Clem. Alex. 2 Pædag. c. 1. which

which they kept the holy Sacrament to communicate themselves.*

The Christians rejected all clothes of too bright a colour; but St Clement of Alexandria recommended White, as an emblem of purity:† And it was the most usual colour among the Greeks and Romans.‡ The Christians also rejected stuffs that were too fine, and silk above all, which was then indeed so scarce, as to be sold for its weight in gold. They rejected also rings, jewels, curled hair, perfumes, the too frequent use of the bath, excessive cleanliness, in a word, whatever could excite sensual love and pleasure.¶ Prudentius reckons as the first mark of St Cyprian's conversion, the change in his exterior, and his contempt of dress.§ Apollonius, an ancient Ecclesiastical writer, thus reproaches the Montanists, speaking of their pretended Prophets: "Tell me, doth a Prophet dye his hair or beard? Doth he love fine dress? Doth he play at dice? Doth he let out his money at interest? Let them tell me, if this be allowed, or not; and I will shew that they do so."¶ A Martyr, to convince the Judges of a pretended Christian's imposture, represented to them, "that this cheat wore curled hair, and was fond of barbers: that he gazed too much at women: that he was a

* A. & Martyr. Nicom. ap. Baron. An. 293.

† 2 Pædag. c. 10. ‡ Vopis. Aurel. p. 224. D. || Clem. Alex. 2. Pædag. c. 10, 11, 12. &c. & 3. c. 1, 2, 3.—

Const. Apost. l. 1. c. 3. & l. 5. c. 9. § Perist. Hymn. 13.

¶ Ap. Euf. 5. hist. c. 18.

“great eater, and smelt of wine.”* The whole exterior of the Christians was severe and negligent, or, at least, plain and grave. Some laid aside the common dress, to take that of the Philosophers, as did Tertullian, and St Heraclas, a disciple of Origen.†

They took few diversions; they avoided all public shews, whether those of the Theatre, the Amphitheatre, or the Circus. On the Theatre were acted Tragedies and Comedies: In the Amphitheatre were exhibited combats of gladiators and wild beasts: The Circus was destinated to the chariot-races. All these public shews were a part of the worship paid to the false Gods, and of the pomps of the devil.‡ This alone was sufficient to drive the Christians from them. But they considered them as a great source of the corruption of morals: “We ought not,” (says Tertullian) to love the representation of what we ought not to do.”§ The Theatre was the school of immodesty; the Amphitheatre that of cruelty: And this the Christians held in such abhorrence, that they would not even see the executions of criminals.¶ Every one of these public sports fomented all sorts of passions. Even those of the Circus, which appeared the most innocent, are detested by the Fathers, on account of the factions that reigned therein,

* Aët. S. Sebas. ap. Baron. an. 229. n. 16, 17.

† Tert. de Pall. Euf. 6. hist. c. 26. ‡ S. Cyp. Ep. 1.

§ De Spect. c. 21. § Athenag. Apol. p. 38.

The severe grave. to take allian, † voided Thea- On d Co- exhi- feasts: ariot- a part, and he was them. source ought repre- do." † desty; d this, that ons of sports those st in- on ac- erein,

and which every day produced quarrels, furious animosities, and bloody frays.* Lastly, they blamed the great expence of these shews, the idleness they encouraged, the meeting of both sexes, who were there assembled promiscuously together, disposed to gaze on one another with too much freedom and curiosity.†

The Christians also condemned dice, and other sedentary games, the least evil of all which is, that they keep up idleness and sloth.‡ They blamed loud laughter, and whatever excites it: Such as ridiculous gestures and talk, merry stories, acts of buffoonery, and fooleries: And still with more reason, all sorts of immodest gestures and words. They would admit of nothing unbecoming in the life of Christians, nothing vulgar or unworthy of persons of character: Nothing of that silly, useless talk, so common among the lower class of people, especially the women; but condemned by St Paul, when he says that our discourse ought always to be seasoned with the salt of grace.¶ It was in order to retrench all these disorders, that silence was so much recommended.

A discipline like this, will undoubtedly appear very severe now-a-days: But we shall

* Aug. 6. Conf. c. 7. † Clem. 3. Pædag. II. Cyp. de op. Eleem.-----Ovid. de Art. amand. lib. I. V. 89.

‡ Clem. 3. Pædag. c. II. Apollon. ap. Euf. 5. hist. c. 18. —Clem. Pædag. II. c. 67.---Iren. 4. c. 47.---Ambros. l. I. Off. c. 23.---Const. Apostol. 5. 9. || Col. iv. 6.

be the less surprized at it, if we consider that Jeerers are often blamed and cursed in the holy Scriptures;* that the life of JESUS-CHRIST, and that of his Disciples was very grave and serious; and that St Paul expressly and by name condemns what the Greeks called *Eutrapelia*, and of which Aristotle wanted to make a virtue. The Latin Interpreter has rendered it by the word *Scurrility*, which has made our modern Doctors mistake its meaning. And, indeed, the whole life of a Christian consists in expiating past sins by the practices of penance, and in guarding himself against future sins, by the mortification of the passions. The Penitent, in order to punish himself for his past abuse of pleasures, ought to begin by depriving himself even of those that are allowable: And, in order to extinguish concupiscence, or, at least, to weaken it, the fewest possible must be granted him. Thus a true Christian ought not to seek after what pleases the senses, but only to take, as it were, by the by, that pleasure which is connected with the necessary functions of life, such as eating and sleeping. If he take any diversion, it ought to be really a diversion, that is to say, a relaxation of the mind, a rest from labour, to satisfy the weakness of nature, which would sink, if the body always laboured, and the mind were perpetually fixed on one certain object. But to seek pleasure merely for

* Prov. iii. 34. ix. 7. xii. x9. 29. &c.—Chrys. hom. 6. in Matt. Mor. Eph. v. 4. & hom. 17. Mor. V. 8. The. 2. 2. Q. 168. A. 2.

for pleasure's sake, and for no other end, is certainly acting the most contrary to the obligation of renouncing ourselves, which is the soul of all the Christian virtues. Bodily labour, or moderate exercise, is a relaxation to the mind; mere rest, food, and sleep, are sufficient to recruit the body: Sedentary games are never necessary. This we see by the example of the poor, and of all the common people, who continually labour. They are the rich, and such as have no employment, who seek after diversions to diminish the irksomeness of their idle life.

This serious and mortified turn of true Christians is seen by the nature of the heresies of these first ages, most of which arose from an excess of severity and hatred of the body. The Marcionites, and afterwards the Manicheans, maintained that the flesh was evil, as being the work of the evil principle: From whence they concluded that it was not lawful to eat any, nor to multiply it by generation, or hope it would rise again. This contempt of the body, this abstinence and continence, had a specious outward appearance. The Montanists added several fasts of obligation to those enjoined by the Church.* They condemned second marriages, and would not admit of the Sacrament of repentance, thinking the Church had not the power of raising such as had fallen into any great crimes after their baptism. A man who should

* Greg. Naz. Or. 6. p. 140.

take it into his head to maintain such errors now-a-days, would scarce find any followers.

But, however severe this mode of life of the first Christians may appear to us; we must not imagine that it was sad and sorrowful. St Paul required not what was impossible, when he exhorts them to rejoice.* If they deprived themselves of those violent pleasures, which are the general pursuit of the greater part of mankind, they were, at the same time, exempt from the vexations and other passions which torment them, since they spent their lives void of ambition and free from avarice.† As they had no attachment to the good things of this life, they were little affected with the calamities thereof. They enjoyed peace of conscience, the satisfaction arising from good actions, by which they endeavoured to please God: And above all, they enjoyed the hope of another life, which they looked upon as near at hand. For they knew that this visible world passes quickly away, and the persecutions appeared to them as forerunners of the general judgment.

Thus the care of posterity gave them no concern.‡ They wished their children the same happiness they wished themselves; viz. speedily to quit this world. If they left them orphans, which was often the case with the Martyrs, they knew the Church would be their mother, and that they would

* Phil. iii. i. iv. 4.
E. ad Uxor. c. 5.

† Cyp. ad Demetr. ‡ Tert.

want for nothing. Most of them, therefore, lived from hand to mouth, by manual labour, or on their income, which they shared with the poor. Thus they lived free from all anxiety, and disembarassed of all worldly concerns, averse to all sordid gain, and to whatever could in the least degree be suspected of injustice; and, moreover, void of every desire of amassing and of growing rich. The disorder of which the Bishops mostly complained in the intervals of the persecutions, was that the Christians purchased immoveables, and sought establishments on earth. Men, who had thus weaned themselves from all temporal concerns, had no great relish for the pleasures of sense: And we ourselves are not thoroughly Christians, if we have not a sincere desire at least of resembling them. "What greater pleasure," says Tertullian, "than to condemn the world, than to enjoy true liberty and purity of conscience, to be content with a little, and not to fear death? You trample under foot the Gods of the Gentiles, you drive out devils, you cure diseases, you ask for revelations, you live to God.—These are the pleasures, these are the shews of Christians."*

* Tert. de Spect. c. 9.

§ XII.—MARRIAGES.

WITH all this detachment from temporal concerns, most of the Christians were married. The celibacy of the Heathens was hateful, as being founded only on licentiousness and debauchery. Therefore the civil laws endeavoured to repress these by different penalties, and by bestowing rewards on those who increased the number of citizens by the fruits of lawful marriages.*

Those who found themselves overburdened with children, made no difficulty of exposing them as soon as born. The Christians detested this inhumanity. "We marry," says St Justin, "only to have children: Or "totally renouncing Marriage, we observe "perfect continency."† And St Clement of Alexandria says, "A man either ought "to marry, or totally refrain from the pleasures of the married state."‡ They therefore knew but these two states of life, and gave the preference to the latter; the excellence of which they knew from divine authority.¶ Many engaged themselves to continency immediately after their baptism:§ And among those who had been Christians from their infancy, there were many, of both sexes, who had preserved their purity to the age of sixty or seventy.¶ It is well known

* Tacit. Ann. 3. Cod. de infirm. pæn. cælib. V. Barren. an. 57. n. 44, &c. † 1. Apol. p. 91. ‡ 2. Pæd. c. 10. ¶ Id. 5. Strom. p. 459. Athenog. Apol. p. 38.

§ Tert. ad Uxor. c. 5. ¶ Justin. 1. Apol. p. 61.

how far Origen carried his indiscreet zeal for continency; and this abuse of mutilating themselves became so frequent, that it was found necessary to enact canons to suppress it.*

The more austere sort of heretics carried this point much too far. Some of them condemned second marriages:† Others condemned all marriages in general, and looked upon every union of the sexes as a crime. It is to these latter, St Clement of Alexandria applies the prediction of St Paul concerning those, who were to come in the latter times, forbidding marriage.‡ This it was which made that Father and others extol the sanctity of the married state, and cite the examples of St Peter and St Philip, who were both of them married, and had children. The Fathers considered marriage in a noble light, as having for its end the production of rational creatures, who are to subsist for all eternity; and rendering man, in a particular manner, the image of God, by concurring with him in the production of a man.¶ They would not have us propose to ourselves pleasure alone in that dangerous, though lawful intercourse, but to regulate it by reason and decency; with a continual attention to the presence of God, who sees, in the thickest darkness, and with a great respect for our bodies, which are his Temples.

* Can. Apost. 21, 22. Can. Nic. 1. † Tert. de Monogam. ‡ 3. Strom. p. 446. ¶ Clem. Alex. 2. Padag. c. 10.

Among the precepts regarding the education of children, the holy Fathers recommended the marrying them young, to prevent any irregular course of life.* Those who were so charitable as to bring up poor orphans, were advised to marry them as soon as they came of age, and with their own children rather than with others:† And this shews how little temporal interest was considered in the marriage of Christians. The Bishop was consulted on marriages, as well as on other concerns of importance, “in order,” says St Ignatius, “that they may be contracted according to God, and not to gratify concupiscence.”‡ When the parties were agreed, the marriage was celebrated publicly and with solemnity in the Church; and was consecrated by the blessing of the Pastor, and confirmed by the oblation of the holy Sacrifice.§ They joined hands, and the wife received from the husband a ring, engraved with a Cross, or symbolic figure of some virtue, as a dove, an anchor, or a fish.¶ Such were the seals commonly used by the Christians: And among all the ancients, rings served for seals.

The Christians refrained from the use of marriage on solemn festivals, and on fasting-days. Hence the prohibition of marrying at certain times of the year is still continued: And they generally lived in continency,

* Const. Apost. 4, c. 10. † Ib. c. 1. ‡ Ep. ad Polycare. § Tert. 2. ad Uxor. infinc. ¶ Clem. Alex. § Pedag. c. 1.

when they had a mind to apply themselves, with greater liberty, to prayer, according to the advice of the Apostle:* St Clement of Alexandria says, that the *Gnostic*, or the perfect Christian, when he has had children by his wife, will consider her as his sister, since she is to be so one day, when they have quit-
 ted their bodies:† And Tertullian certifies that several observed continency, by mutual consent, in the married state.‡ He thus represents the happiness of a Christian marriage: “Two of the Faithful bear together
 “the same yoke. They make together only
 “one body and one soul. They pray to-
 “gether; they prostrate together; they fast
 “together; they instruct and exhort one an-
 “other. They are together at Church, and
 “at the table of God; in the times of per-
 “secution, and in the intervals of ease. They
 “conceal nothing from each other, nor do
 “they give each other any uneasiness. They
 “visit the sick when they please; they be-
 “stow their alms without restraint; they as-
 “sist at the sacrifice without uneasiness.
 “They sing psalms and hymns together;
 “they excite each other to praise God.”||
 The Faithful were not allowed to marry un-
 believers, but they might continue to live
 together, if they were married before.§ Sec-
 ond marriages, though permitted, were
 looked upon as a weakness, and, in some

* 1. Cor. vii. 5. † 6. Strom. p. 664. ‡ Ad. Uxor.
 c. 3. de Resur. carn. c. 8. || 2. ad Uxor. in fine.
 § 1. Cor. vii. 12, 13.

Churches, such as married a second time, were subjected to public penance.*

§ XIII.—*Union of the Christians.*

SUCH nearly was the domestic life of each Christian: Let us now see how they behaved when they met together in their assemblies. The name of *Ecclesia*, or Church, signifies nothing but a meeting of people together; and, among the Greek cities, was taken for an assembly of all the people to treat on public business; and the place of meeting was generally the Theatre. We have, in the Acts of the Apostles, an instance of one of these profane assemblies at Ephesus; and to distinguish the assemblies of the Faithful, they were called the Assembly or Church of God.† Origen, in his answer to Celsus, draws a comparison between these two sorts of assemblies or Churches, and maintains, as a certain fact, that the least zealous among the Christians, the number of whom was small in comparison of the others, were so much above all other men, that the assemblies of the Christians were like stars in the firmament.‡ The Christians therefore of each town, made up a body of themselves; and this was one of the chief pretexts for persecuting them: For their meetings were treated as illegal, not because authorized by the laws of the state. The

* Tert. 2. ad Uxor. c. 2. Hier. ad Salvin. in fine.

† Acts xix. 31, 32, &c. ‡ In Cels. 3. p. 130.

Heathens likewise made a crime of that union, which charity formed among the Christians, and made it pass for a conspiracy against the government.*

In fact, all the Christians of the same place knew each other, were it only by means of the assemblies they held for prayers and other religious exercises, where they met one another almost every day. They were often together, and conformed to one another even in things indifferent. Their joys and afflictions were in common. If any one had received some particular favour from God, all shared therein. If any one did public penance, all sued for mercy. They lived together like relations, calling one another *Fathers, Children, Brothers and Sisters*, according to their age and sex.

This union was kept up by the authority of each Father in his own family, and by the submission they shewed to the Priests and the Bishops, so much recommended in the letters of St Ignatius the Martyr. The Bishops, above all, were perfectly united together: They did nothing of importance, but by common consent. Those of each province often met together in council, when they had the liberty to do so. The most distant knew one another, at least by name and reputation, and frequently corresponded by letters; which was easily done, on account of the great extent of the Roman Empire, which God seemed to have formed.

* Tert. Apol. c. 39.

designedly, as Origen says,* to facilitate the preaching of the Gospel. These Letters were of a particular form, both to prevent their being falsified, and to keep the secrecy so necessary in matters of such importance; especially in the times of persecution. For greater safety, these letters were sent by some of the Clergy; and when these were wanting, they rather chose to ordain one on purpose, than to send their letters by another hand.† But as the Church was extended far beyond the bounds of the Empire, on every side of it, the uniformity of belief and manners found among all Christians, was still more wonderful in this great diversity of nations, where it was seen that the true Religion had corrected, in its followers, all barbarous and irrational customs and practices.‡ In a word, the Universal Church was truly one body, whose members were united, not only in the same faith, but by a sincere charity.

§XIV.—ASSEMBLIES,—LITURGY.

EACH particular Church or Congregation assembled together on the Lord's-day, or, as the Heathens called it, and we after them, *Sun-day*; and which the Christians have always honoured in memory of the creation of light, and the resurrection of JESUS-CHRIST.¶ They assembled also on Friday,

* in Cels. 2. p. 79. † Cyp. Ep. 9. ad Cler. Rom.
‡ Bardes. ap. Euf. Præp. Evang. c. 8. Euf. 1. Præp. c. 4.
¶ Just. 2. Apol. in fine.—Orig. in Exod. hom. 7. in li. hom. 5.

which

which the Christians still continued to call *Parasceve*. The place of meeting was a private house, where they chose one of those large rooms to eat in, which the Latins called *Canacula*, or supper-rooms, and which were always in the upper part of the house. Such was that from which the young man, Eutychus, fell, whom St Paul raised to life.* It was on the third story, enlightened with several lamps: And the Faithful were assembled there on Sunday night for the breaking of bread; that is to say, for the celebration of the mysteries, which was followed by a repast. Often did the persecutions oblige them to conceal themselves in the *Crypte*, or subterraneous caves out of the towns, like the Catacombs, which are still seen at Rome, and of which we have a description in the book called *Roma Soterranea*.† When they enjoyed greater liberty, they publicly assembled in places more known to every body to be Christian Churches.‡ We see instances of this under the Emperor Alexander, and under Gordianus. When the Emperor Gallicus put an end to the persecution, he ordered their *Cæmeteries* to be restored to the Christians, which commonly had Churches adjoining to them.|| And when Paul of Samosata was deposed, the Emperor Aurelian commanded that the house belonging to the Church should be restored to those who

* Acts xx. 7, 8, 9, 10, &c. † V. Baron. an. 57. n. 99. ‡ Id. an. 224. n. 3. an. 225. n. 502. || Euf. 8. hist. c. 3. & 7. ib. c. 13.

were in the communion of the Bishop of Rome.* Some of these public Churches had been private houses, as is mentioned of that of the senator, St Pudens, father of St Novatus and St Timothy, Priest, of all the holy Virgins, St Pudentiana and St Praxedes.† There were often also new buildings erected on purpose. A little before the persecution of Dioclesian, Churches had been built anew from the foundations in all the cities—so greatly was the number of the Faithful increased. And the persecution began by pulling down these buildings.‡

In these assemblies, the prayers mentioned above were said at the different hours of night and day; and the sacrifice was there also offered, which could not be done without the Priests. These assemblies were denominated either from the names given them in the scripture, as the *Supper*, the *Breaking of Bread*, the *Oblation*: Or from names the Church afterwards adopted, as *Synaxis*, that is, assembly; in Latin, *Collecta*; *Eucharist*, that is, Thanksgiving:|| *Liturgy*, which means public service. It was sometimes celebrated before day-break, during the times of persecution, that it might not be interrupted by the Heathens.§ There was only one sacrifice offered in each Church, that is to say, in each Diocese. It was the Bishop who offered it, and the Priests never did, ex-

* Euf. hist. 8. c. 30. † Mart. Rom. 20. Jun. ‡ Euf. 8. hist. c. 3. || Dominicum, Collecta. § Cyp. Ep. 63. ad Cecil.

cept when the Bishop could not do it, being either absent or sick: The Priests however assisted at the altar, and all of them offered it together with him. The order of the Liturgy has undergone some changes, according to times and places, and some ceremonies, indifferent of themselves, have been added to it, and others have been retrenched; but, what is essential, has always been the same. Here follows what has been written on it from the earliest ages.

After some prayers, the sacred scriptures were read; first Lessons out of the old Testament, then out of the new. These Lessons were always concluded by reading the Gospel, which the Bishop or Priest afterwards explained; adding thereto some exhortation suitable to the wants of his flock. Then all stood up, and turning towards the east, with hands lifted up to heaven, they prayed for all sorts of people; for Christians, for unbelievers, for the great and the little, and particularly for such as were under any affliction, for the sick, and all in a state of suffering. The Deacon exhorted all to pray; the Bishop or Priest pronounced the prayer, and the people gave their assent thereto by answering *Amen*.* Then were offered the gifts, that is to say, bread, and wine mixed with water, which was to be the matter of the sacrifice.† The people gave one another the kiss of peace; the men to the men, the women to the women, as a

* Just. 2. Apol. † Cyp. Ep. 63.

token of perfect union. Then each one made his offering to the Priest, who offered them to God in the name of all*. After that, began the action of the sacrifice, when the Priest admonished the people to raise up their hearts to God, to give him thanks, and to adore him with profound reverence, together with the Angels and all the Powers of heaven.† He then went on praying, till relating the institution of the Eucharist by JESUS-CHRIST at his last supper, and repeating his words, he performed the consecration. After which, he recited, with all the people, the Lord's Prayer: And having received the communion himself, he distributed it, by the hands of the Deacons, to all present:‡ For, regularly speaking, all, who came into the Church, were to communicate, particularly the Ministers of the altar.¶ They received the body of the Lord with the greatest precaution, lest the least particle thereof should fall to the ground.§

As to those who could not assist at the sacrifice, the Eucharist was sent to them by the Deacons or Acolyths. A part was also reserved for the *Viaticum* of dying persons, that is, for their provision for the great journey they had to take. The Faithful were moreover allowed to carry it home with them, in order to take it every morning, before any other food; or on occa-

* Clem. 2. Pædag. c. 2.—Orig. in Rom. 16. lib. 10.
 † Cyp. de Orat. ‡ Just. 2. Apol. ¶ Can. Apost.
 9. 10. § Orig. in Exod. hom. 13,

sions of dangers, as when they were going to Martyrdom; because they had not every day the liberty to celebrate the mysteries.* What was reserved for persons in health or in sickness, was the species of bread alone; though, when assembled together, all generally communicated under both kinds, except the little children, to whom the Eucharist was given under the species of wine alone. The *Agape*, or charity-feasts, which followed the communion in those early ages, were repasts of common meat, of which they partook all together in the same place.† Afterwards this repast was given to the widows and to the poor. There was always a share set apart for the Pastor, though absent. The Priests and Deacons had a double share: and one was given to each of the Readers, Precentors, and Door-keepers.‡

§ XV.—*Secrecy of the Mysteries.*

IT was in these assemblies that the other sacraments were administered, as far as might be done; and it was on that account that the Infidels were so carefully excluded, as the Christians inviolably observed the precept of the Lord, *not to give what was holy to dogs, nor cast pearls before swine.*|| Hence the sacraments were called *Mysteries*, that is to say, things concealed, concerning

* Tert. 1. ad Ux.—Clem. 1. Strom. p. 271. † Cyp. de Lapsis. ‡ Const. Apost. 2. c. 8. Tert. de Jejun. c. 17. || Matt. vii. 6.

which

which an inviolable secrecy was observed with regard to such as were not initiated therein. These mysteries were therefore concealed not only from unbelievers, but even from the Catechumens themselves. They were not only never celebrated in their presence, but they were not even told what passed therein, nor were the sacred words ever pronounced before them, or the nature of the sacrament spoken of: Much less were they committed to writing.* If in any public discourse or writing, which might fall into profane hands, there were a necessity of speaking of the Eucharist, or any other mystery, it was always done in obscure and enigmatical terms. Thus, in the New Testament, to *break bread*,† signifies to consecrate and distribute the Eucharist, which the unbelievers could not understand. This discipline continued many years after the Church enjoyed its liberty. We must only except the Apologies, in which the Fathers explained the mysteries in order to justify the Christians against the calumnies, with which they were loaded.

After all, it was nothing new to the Heathens to see secrets in religion. They had the same in their profane ceremonies. Those who were initiated in the mysteries of Osiris, of Ceres, of Eleusina, or of Cybele, of the Gods of Samothracia, &c. thought themselves bound to conceal them, under the apprehension of the most dreadful curses

* Orig. in Jos. P. 4. † Acts ii. 42, 46.—Ib. xx. 7. fr. fal-

falling on them, and passed for impious wretches and villains, if they at any time revealed them. Apuleius furnishes us with an instance much to the purpose;* and it is this that makes Herodotus often say, when speaking of the different religious ceremonies among the Egyptians: "I know the meaning of them very well, but I dare not tell."

§ XVI.—*Calumnies against the Christians.*

THIS secrecy, however, with regard to the mysteries, failed not to become a subject of calumny against the Christians. For people oftener conceal what is bad than what is good; and it was but too notorious that, in other religions, the greatest part of the mysteries, which were concealed with so much care, were nothing but infamous acts of debauchery; as in the ceremonies of Ceres and Cybele, and those sacrifices of Bacchus, which were prohibited by an order of the senate in the year of Rome 568.† The general prejudice which prevailed against the Christians, made it easily presumed, that what they kept so great a secret, was something of the same nature. These suspicions were strengthened by the abominable practices of the Gnostics, the Carpocratians, and other heretics in their

* De Asino. lib. II. † Orig. in Cels. lib. I.—Tert. Apol. 7.—Clem. Alex. Protrept.—Liv. 59. c. 9.—Greg. Naz. Orat. 33.

assemblies,* and which we can scarce believe, though the account thereof is given us by the holy Fathers: For the heretics all bore the name of Christians.† The Catholics themselves had Heathen slaves, who, thro' the dread of torture, would say against their masters, whatever their enemies pleased.

Thus was propagated the fable that the Christians, in their nocturnal assemblies, killed a child, which they eat, after they had roasted it and covered it with flour, dipping their bread in its blood; which evidently came from a misrepresentation of the mystery of the Eucharist.‡ It was also said of the Christians, that after their repast in common, at which they eat and drank to excess, a morsel was thrown to a dog fastened to a candlestick or the chandelier: And that the dog, leaping at the morsel, overturned the only light in the room; and that afterwards, under favour of the darkness, all their men and women came promiscuously together, like brute beasts, as chance ordered it.¶ The Jews were the chief authors of these calumnies; and however absurd they were, the common people gave credit to them; and the Christians were obliged to set about seriously refuting them.§ The example in the Bacchanalian feasts, in which, two hundred years

* Cast. ap. Euf. 4 hist. c. 7. --- Baron. an. 120. n. 22. --- Eriph. hæ. 26, 27. --- Iren. lib. 1. c. 24. † Euf. 5. hist. c. 1. --- Just. 1. Apol. p. 50. ‡ See the Author's Ecclef. Hist. l. 3. c. 21. --- Euf. 4. hist. c. 7. --- Athenag. Just. 1. Apol. ¶ Min. Felix. § Tert. Apol. c. 7, 8. --- Orig. in Cels. 6. p. 293.

before, such horrid crimes had been discovered, made people generally believe, that there was nothing so abominable, which might not be introduced under the pretext of religion.

The Christians were moreover accused of being enemies to all mankind, and particularly to the Roman power; of repining at the prosperity of the Empire, and of wishing its destruction.* All this was grounded on what the Christians said of the vanity of all temporal grandeur, of the end of the world, and of the day of judgment; and, perhaps, on the indiscreet or malicious report of what is foretold in the Apocalypse, concerning the punishment of idolatrous Rome, and the vengeance God would one day take for the blood of the Martyrs. What confirmed this calumny was, that they took no part in the public rejoicings, which consisted in sacrifices, feasts, and public shews, full of idolatrous practices and dissolutions.† On the contrary, they affected to pass these days in affliction and penance on account of the numberless crimes committed on them: And they rather chose those days for days of rejoicing, which the Heathens considered as lugubrious and unlucky‡ They even avoided fairs, on account of the public games exhibited at them.¶ If they went to them at

* Lucian Philop. † Tert. Apol. c. 37. ‡ Const. Apost. 5. c. 6, 9.---Clem. 1. Pædag.---Ang. in Pf. 98.---Serm. 7. in App. Ambr.---Baron. in Martyr. 1. Jan. ¶ Const. Apost. 2. c. 26.

all, it was only to buy in haste some of the necessaries of life, or some slave in order to make a convert of him.

In a word, the profession they made of detesting all the established religions, was sufficient to render them odious to the common people. In vain did they declare, that they adored in spirit that God who created heaven and earth, to whom they continually offered the sacrifice of their prayers. The idolatrous common people understood not such language: they asked them the name of their God, and called them *Atheists*, because they adored none of the Gods seen in any of the Temples; nor had any blazing altars, or bloody sacrifices, or statues known to the people.* The Priests of the idols, the Augurs, the Aruspices, the Sooth-sayers; in a word, all whose professions were founded on heathenism, failed not to foment and keep up this hatred of the common people; and to employ, for that purpose, the pretended prodigies, and the public calamities which happened; such as droughts, and pestilences. "The Christians," said they, "drew down the wrath of the Gods on all who suffered them to live."†

By these prejudices, their very virtues were turned to a poison. The charity they had for one another, was an odious conspiracy. The names of brothers and sisters, which they gave one another, were interpreted in a bad sense; because, in fact, the

* Min. Felix.

† Tert. Apol. c. 40. Arnob. init.

Heathens

Heathens used them for purposes of debauchery.* Their alms passed for means of seducing the poor, and of drawing them over to their party; or as an effect of the greediness of the Bishops, that they might amass great treasures in their Churches, to have them at their own disposal.† Their miracles, they said, were the effect of witchcraft and magical impostures. And, in reality, impostors, who boasted they could foretell what was to come, by different sorts of divination, or that they could cure diseases by certain characters and enchantments, by some barbarous words or extravagant figures, abounded every where. They even performed surprising things to deceive the sight, either by art, or the power of the devil. Apollonius of Tyana is an illustrious example of this. The Heathens, therefore, were not very much surprized at hearing of miracles, or even seeing them. True miracles were confounded with false ones; and all were equally held in contempt who passed for performers of any.‡ The country the Apostles and first Christians came from, moreover, helped forward this error; for the greatest part of these impostors came from the East.

The very persecutions themselves were a subject of hatred against the Christians. They were supposed to be guilty, because they were every where treated as if they had

* Tert. Apol. c. c. 39. † Prud. Hymn. in S. Laur.
‡ Orig. in Cels. lib. 2.

been guilty; and a judgment was formed of the enormity of their crimes by the severity of the punishments inflicted on them. They were looked upon as a set of people devoted to death, destined to the fire and the gibbet; and called by opprobrious names taken from the punishments inflicted on them.* This it was that rendered the Christians such objects of hatred to the common people and the ignorant: Such were the grounds of whatever Suetonius and Tacitus say of the Christians, being led away by the common opinion. Suetonius says, "that the Emperor Claudius drove the Jews out of Rome for raising continual disturbances, at the instigation of CHRIST;†" as if CHRIST had still been on earth, and had put himself at the head of a party among the Jews. He reckons the putting of the Christians to death, among the good actions of Nero: "A people," adds he, "who were followers of a new and mischievous superstition."‡

Tacitus,|| speaking of Nero's setting Rome on fire for his diversion, says, "that he accused thereof a set of men, whom the common people called Christians." He then adds, "This name came from CHRIST,

* Tert. Apol. c. 50.—Baron. an. 158. n. 5.—Biaotharati. Sarmenticii. femaxii. V. Baron. an. 384. n. 5.

† Judæos, impulsore Christo, assidue tumultuantes, Roma expulsi. ‡ Suet. Nero. n. 16. affecti suppliciis.

Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novæ ac maleficæ. || Ann. Quos per flagitia invisos, vulgus Christiano appellabat. Repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio, &c.

“ whom Pontius Pilate had caused to be
 “ executed under the empire of Tiberius.
 “ And this pernicious superstition, repressed
 “ for that time, rose up afresh, not only in
 “ Judea, from whence the mischief came ;
 “ but in Rome itself, where whatever is hor-
 “ rid and detestable in the whole world, is
 “ found and practised. * First, there were
 “ some seized, who confessed ; then, on the
 “ report of these, a great multitude were
 “ convicted, not so much of firing the city,
 “ as of the hatred of mankind against them.”
 He afterwards treats them, “ as guilty and
 “ deserving to be made examples of.”

§ XVII.—*Other Subjects of Reproach.*

SENSIBLE people, and even such as had
 examined somewhat into the Christian
 religion, had likewise their reasons for dis-
 liking the Christians. For these sensible
 people, were either Greeks or Romans,
 accustomed to despise all other nations,
 whom they called *Barbarians*, and especi-
 ally the Jews, who had been, for a long
 time, decried and looked upon as a set
 of people ridiculously superstitious, and
 weakly credulous. “ A Jew,” says Horace,
 speaking of a prodigy, “ may believe it,
 “ but I cannot.” † Wherefore when they

* Quo omnia undique atrocia & pudenda confluunt,
 celebrauturque.

† Sat. 5. Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.

were

were told that some of the Jews adored, as the son of God, a man who had been hanged; and that their chief dispute with the rest of the Jews, was whether this man was still alive after his death, and if he was their true King. * It is easy to judge how absurd such disputes must have appeared to them. They saw that this new sect was hated and persecuted by all the other Jews, so as to excite frequent seditions: † and they hence concluded that they must be the worst of all.

They were further told, that these people employed neither argument nor eloquence to persuade, but only exhorted others to believe the facts they advanced, and which they pretended to confirm by miracles: that the greater part of them were a set of ignorant wretches, and studied only the books of the Jews: that they professed to instruct only such ignorant creatures as themselves, women, and the common people, because they found them better disposed to receive their doctrine, than those of more enlightened minds. ‡ This mode of proceeding was quite new to the Heathens, who had no sort of instruction whatever for the common people. The Philosophers alone spoke of morality, and their disputes had nothing to do with the practices of religion. || Lastly, as all the heretics went by the name of Christians, the dreams of the Valentinians and other Visionaries attacked by St Irenæus,

* Acts xxv. 19.

† Ibid. xxviii. 22.

‡ Orig. in Cels. 3.

|| Aug. de vera relig. init.

were attributed to the whole Church: * and the Heathens confounded all their wild notions with the Catholic doctrine; and Christianity appeared to them nothing but the effects of obstinacy in a set of ignorant and positive creatures. †

“ Why,” said they “ should you abandon
“ religions so long ago instituted, with
“ such fine ceremonies, by the authority of
“ so many kings and legislators, and by the
“ consent of all nations, both Greeks and
“ Barbarians, to embrace foreign manners
“ and customs, and to interest yourselves in
“ the support of Jewish fables? Were you
“ to become quite Jews, it might be allow-
“ ed you to do so; but what a madness is
“ it to serve the God of the Jews in spite
“ of the Jews, by a new worship rejected by
“ them, and to make use of laws, which are
“ not proper for you!” ‡

The morality of the Christians, it is true, was pure, and their lives corresponded with their doctrine. But there were every where Philosophers, who made a profession of practising virtue and of teaching it. || There were also many, in these first ages of the Church, who, perhaps, in imitation of the Christians, went about, pretending to reform mankind, and, on that account, suffered some ill usage, as Apollonius of Tyana, Musonius, Damis, Epictetus. The Philosophers had been in repute for several ages:

* Orig. in Cels.

† V. Baron. An. 179. n. 27828.

‡ Euf. Preep. Evang. 1 c. 2. || Tert. Apol. c. 56.

people thought they had said every thing, and could not conceive how any barbarians should know more than Pythagoras, Plato, or Zeno. They were rather inclined to believe, that, if these people had any thing good amongst them, they must have borrowed it from those so famous sages of old.* Besides, the Philosophers were more accommodating in their doctrine of morals than the Christians. Most of them did not reject pleasure, and some made it the supreme good of man. They left every one to follow his own opinion, and to live as he pleased, contenting themselves with despising such as were not Philosophers, and making a jest of them. The number of Philosophers was very great. These doubted of every thing, especially of whatever regarded the Deity, a point so poorly cleared up by them. They made it a rule of prudence and wisdom to suspend their judgment; and took it very much amiss, that a set of ignorant men, and of the common people, such as most of the Christians were, should have the presumption to decide on so sublime a subject. For their part, they made a profession of respecting the established religions. Some believed in them, and gave mysterious explications of the most ridiculous fables; others, keeping to themselves the knowledge they had of the supreme Being, the author of nature, left the superstitions to those whom they judged in-

* Minut. Fella.

capable of wisdom. The Epicureans themselves, who declared the most openly against the popular opinions concerning the Gods, failed not to assist at the sacrifices, and took a part in the ceremonies of the religion of the places where they chanced to be.* They all agreed not to attack customs and practices authorized by the laws and length of time.

The belief in a plurality of Gods went so far as to imagine that every nation, every city, each family had their own, who took care of them, and required to be there honoured by some particular mode of worship. Thus they esteemed all religions good with respect to those nations, where they had been long established. Women, and the fickle, ignorant common people were ever much inclined to embrace new religions, thinking that the more Gods and Goddeses they worshiped, and the more diligent and exact they were in observing the different ceremonies, the more religion they would have. Men of a graver turn of mind, and the Politicians, repressed, as far as possible, this restless disposition, and would allow of no change in this point. They especially condemned the introduction of all foreign religions, and the Romans made this a capital point in their policy.† They persuaded the people that Rome was indebted to their tutelary Gods for the greatness of their empire: and that these their Gods must be more

* *Assisto divinis. Hor.*

† *T. Liv. lib. 19.*

power-

powerful than the others, since they had subdued all the nations of the whole world. And in fact, after the full establishment of Christianity, the Heathens failed not to attribute the fall of the empire, which followed soon after, to this change; and St. Augustine was obliged to compose his great work of the CITY OF GOD, to answer their calumnies.

The contempt the Christians expressed for death, did not much surprise the Heathens. They were accustomed to see volunteer-gladiators, who, for a trifling reward, or even for nothing, exposed themselves to be murdered in a crowded theatre.* They saw, every day, people of the best characters put an end to their lives for the slightest disappointment: and there were Philosophers who did it for meer ostentation, or jactation, as lawyers express it.† Witness Peregrinus, whose tragical end is related by Lucian. Thus seeing the Christians shun all the pleasures of this life, and looking for happiness only in a life to come, they were astonished that they did not make away with themselves. “It will be said to us,” says St. Justin, “go all of you then, and kill yourselves, and you will immediately find God, without giving us any further trouble.”‡ And Antoninus, the Proconsul of Asia, seeing the Christians coming in crowds about his tribunal, to present themselves to martyr-

* Tert. Apol. c. 50.

† Vel jactatione, ut quidam Philosophi. l. 6. § 7. ff. de injusto ramp. & ire.

‡ 2 Apol. init.

dom, cried out: "Ah wretches! If you wish to die, you have ropes and precipices enow."*

All were therefore set against the Christians, the common people, the magistracy, the ignorant and learned. They were hated by some as impostors, villains, and men without religion; and despised by others as haters of mankind, a sect of visionaries and melancholic fools, whom an obstinacy, to a degree of madness, made rush on to death. The general prejudice against them was such, that they were condemned for the name alone of Christian, without any further examination. This name was sufficient to destroy the merit of all the good, they were otherways known to do: and it was a common saying among the Heathens: "such a one is an honest, worthy man; only he is a Christian."†

§ XVIII—*Form of Trials. Punishments.*

IT is no wonder that this public hatred should draw down persecutions on the Christians. But, perhaps, some may be surprized that the Romans, who, in their laws, and in all other respects, appear to us men full of good sense and equity, should exercise towards other Romans, or even towards any men, the cruelties we read of in the histories of the martyrs: that the judges should cause

* Tert. ad scapul. c. ult. † Bonus vir C. Sejus, tantum quod Christianus. Tert. Apol. c. 3.

the accused to be tortured in their presence, in the open market-place, before all the people; and that they should employ such a variety of punishments, as to make them appear to have been arbitrary. Perhaps it may not be useless to see what appertained to their laws and manners, and what a false zeal and policy added thereto.

All the judiciary proceedings of the Romans were in a public audience. Criminal, as well as civil causes were tried, and determined, and sentence passed in the forum or market-place. The magistrate was seated on a high tribunal, under a covered gallery, surrounded by his officers, with Lictors bearing hatchets and bundles of rods; and soldiers ever ready to execute his orders: * for the Roman magistrates were military as well as civil officers. † The punishments of each crime were regulated by the laws; but they were different according to the difference of persons; and always more rigorous towards slaves, than towards freemen; towards strangers, than towards Romans.—Hence St Paul was beheaded, as being a Roman citizen, and St Peter was crucified, as being a Jew. The cross was the most disgraceful of all punishments; and such as were to be fastened to it, were, commonly, first beaten with rods, and had their sides burnt with red-hot irons or lighted torches. The torture was also given in

* Cic. 4. in Verrem. 6. 40.

† L. 6. § 2 ff. de pæn. L. 9. § 11, &c. ib.

public;

public; and it was dreadfully cruel: and to it we must refer most of the sufferings of the martyrs; as the Roman laws did not allow, any more than the French laws, the accused to be tortured but at the interrogatories: * and the same means were employed to make the Christians, as were used to make others confess their real crimes. The same way of torturing by the stretching of the limbs, by scourging, by iron and fire, continued even under the Christian Emperors. This is seen in the instances of St Eutropius and St Tigrius, who were tortured in this manner in hatred of St Chrysostome, though under other pretexts. †

It was an usual thing to condemn the meaner sort of criminals to work in the mines, ‡ as the French now send them to the galleys; or to order them to be exposed to wild beasts, in the Amphitheatre, for the diversion of the people. There might likewise be different sorts of punishments in different provinces: and it cannot be denied that the Magistrates often invented new ones against the Christians, particularly during the last persecutions; when the vexation at seeing their numbers increase, turned to rage; and when the devil suggested means of rather killing the souls than the bodies. I do not believe that any instance can be found of others, besides Christian Virgins, being condemned to prostitution.

* L. 21. ff. de quæst. Tert. Apol. c. 2. † Soz. 7. hist. c. 24. ‡ L. 8. § 4. 5, &c. § 11. ff. de pan.

The love of chastity, so conspicuous in the Christians, caused this kind of punishment to be invented; as also that of the Martyr, mentioned by St Jerome, who was tied down with soft cords on a bed, in a delightful garden, in order to be tempted by a lewd woman, when the Martyr bit off his tongue, and spit it in her face.* In a word, there were very many Martyrs put to death or tortured without any form of trial, either by the mutinous populace, or by their private enemies.

§ XIX.—PERSECUTIONS.

A Persecution commonly began by some edict forbidding the assemblies of the Christians, and condemning to certain penalties all who refused to sacrifice to the Gods. The Bishops gave notice thereof to one another, and exhorted one another to redouble their prayers, and to encourage the people.† Many then fled, according to the advice of JESUS-CHRIST.‡ Even the Bishops and Priests separated; some withdrew, while others remained with the people, and carefully concealed themselves, because the strictest search was made after them, as the destruction of them might disperse the flock. Some changed their names, that they might

* Vit. S. Paulæ. init. † Cyp. Ep. 15. &c. ‡ Matt. x. 23.

not be so easily known.* Some bought themselves off from persecution by money, which they gave not to be molested; and this was suffering in their property, and shewing how much greater a value they set on their souls than on riches.† But if they purchased bills of safety by money, which might make people believe that they had obeyed the edicts of the Emperors, they were called *Libellatics*, and ranked with the Apostates, as having tacitly acknowledged themselves idolaters.‡

The Canons of the Church forbid any one exposing himself voluntarily to martyrdom, or doing any thing that might irritate the Heathens, or draw on a persecution; as to destroy their idols, to set fire to their Temples, to abuse their Gods, or publicly to attack their superstitions.¶ Not but there were instances of some holy Martyrs who acted in somewhat like this manner; and of several who denounced themselves. The general maxim however was, not to tempt God, but to wait with patience until they were discovered, and judicially interrogated, in order to give an account of their faith.§ There were two opposite heresies in this point to be avoided. The Gnostics and Valentinians decried Martyrdom, as of no advantage, since JESUS-CHRIST died to

* Act. S. Peon. † V. Can. 12. S. Pet. Alex. T. 1. Conc. ‡ Cyp. Ep. 52. ad Anton. ¶ Conc. Elib. c. 60.—Orig. in Cels. l. 8. § Const. Apost. 5. c. 5.

save us from death, without distinguishing from what death he saves us.* They even said that it was offering an affront to God; and that since he refuses the blood of goats and bulls, there is no appearance that he desires the blood of men. The Marcionites, on the other hand, exposed themselves to Martyrdom out of hatred to the flesh, and to him who created it, who, they said, was the evil principle. Such as died for the faith, were examined by this rule, to see if they ought to be honoured as Martyrs. This seems to have been the origin of Canonization.†

When any Christians were apprehended, they were brought before the Magistrate, who, seated on his tribunal, judicially interrogated them. If they denied that they were Christians, they generally were dismissed on their word: For it was well known, that such as were really so, either never denied it, or, if they did, ceased to be so any longer. Sometimes, for the greater certainty, they made them immediately do some act of idolatry, or utter some abusive expressions against JESUS-CHRIST. If they confessed themselves to be Christians, endeavours were used to overcome their constancy, first by persuasions and promises, then by threats; and lastly by torments.‡ Attempts were made to take them by sur-

† Iren. l. i. c. 2. — Clem. Strom. 40. — Tert. in Scorp. c. 1. † V. Baron. An. 302. n. 126. ‡ Plin. l. 10. Ep. 97.

prize, and make them commit some act of impiety, though involuntarily, in order to persuade them that they could not now go back from what they had done. As the trial was always in the public market-place, there was always some idol or altar there. Victims were offered in their presence, and force was used to make them taste thereof, so as to open their mouths by violence, to put in a piece of meat, or, at least, a drop of wine which had been offered to the false Gods.* And although the Christians knew, *that it is not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but what cometh out of the mouth, or the heart, this defileth a man:*† they used every endeavour not to give the least scandal to the weak. There were some who suffered their hands to be burnt, by keeping thereon, for a long time, burning coals with incense, lest they might seem to offer incense by shaking off the coals, as St Barlam did, whose elegy St Basil made.‡

The ordinary tortures were stretching them on the rack, with cords fastened to their hands and feet, and drawn by pullies at both ends; or hanging them by the hands with great weights fastened to their feet; beating them with switches or thick sticks, or whips, armed with sharpened points of iron, called scorpions; or thongs of raw hide, and leaden bullets fastened to their

* Can. 14. Pet. Alex. T. 1. Conc. p. 961.—Act. S. S. Tharac. Probi & Andron. † Matt. xv. 11. 13.

‡ Hom. 18.

ends: Many were thus seen to die under the strokes. Others, when stretched out, had their sides burnt, or torn with iron combs or hooks, so that their ribs were often laid bare, and their bowels seen, and the fire getting into the body, suffocated the sufferers. To render their wounds more painful, they were sometimes rubbed with salt and vinegar, and were torn open again when they began to close.

§ XX.—ACTS of the MARTYRS.

UNDER these tortures they were always interrogated. Whatever was said by the Judge or the Sufferers was taken down, word for word, by officers of the register, and the whole trial was thus given in a much more exact manner than is done by any of our officers of justice at present. For as the ancients had the art of writing by short notes, each of which expressed a word, they wrote as fast as others could speak, and put down the very words that were spoken, making the persons speak directly to one another, whereas, in our verbal processes, whatever is said, is spoken in the third person, and put down in the style of the register-office.

These Trials taken down, as above, were called *Acts* or *Deeds*. The Christians took care to procure copies of these trials of their brethren, and paid dear for them. From these

these Acts, and from what they themselves had observed, the Christians compiled the history of the sufferings of the Martyrs, which were preserved, by public authority, in the Churches.* It is said, that St Clement, Pope, appointed, at Rome, seven Notaries, each of whom had this employment in two quarters of the city:† And St Cyprian, during the persecution, recommended the carefully marking down the day on which each one finished his Martyrdom.‡ Many of these Acts of the Martyrs were destroyed during the persecution of Dioclesian; and although Eusebius of Cæsarea had gathered together a great number, his collection has been lost. In St Gregory the Great's time, there were none to be found at Rome: there were only catalogues of their names, with the dates of their happy death, that is to say, Martyrologies.¶ But in other places some Acts of the Martyrs have been preserved, which have been collected and published by the Benedictine Monks in Latin, under the title of the *Pure and Genuine Acts of the Martyrs*.§

In these trials, the Christians were often pressed to denounce their accomplices, that is to say, other Christians, especially the Bishops and Priests who instructed them; as also to give up the holy Scriptures. It was chiefly in the persecution of Dioclesian, that

* A. S. Tharac. &c. in fine. † Lib. Pontif. in Clem. ‡ Ep. 36. ¶ Lib. 7. Ep. ad Eulog. § Many more have since been collected and published from the Syriac by the learned Assemanni at Rome.

the Heathens used all their endeavours to destroy the books of the Christians, being persuaded that it would be the most effectual means of destroying their religion. They sought after them with great diligence, and burnt all they could lay their hands upon. They ransacked the Churches for them, and the houses of the Readers and private persons. When questioned about things of this nature, the Christians were as secret as about the mysteries.* They never would name any person, but only said, "God had instructed them, and that they had the holy Scriptures engraved on their hearts."† Those who were base enough to deliver up the holy Scriptures, or to discover their brethren or pastors, were called *Traditores* or Traitors. If the Martyrs, under their sufferings, uttered any words, they were generally only to praise God, and to implore his mercy and aid.

§ XXI.—PRISONS.

AFTER the Interrogatory, those who persisted in the confession of Christianity, were sometimes sent to execution: But more frequently they were sent back to prison, to try them longer, and to torture them at different intervals. But indeed the

* A. A. Cirtens. An. 303.—A. A. S. Fel. Tibur.

† A. A. Martyr. Abitin.—A. A. S. S. Agapes, &c.

prisons

prisons themselves were another sort of torture. The Confessors of JESUS-CHRIST were shut up in the darkest and most noisome dungeons. They had irons on both hands and feet: Large pieces of wood were put about their necks, or their legs were put into stocks to keep them raised up, or to distend them, the sufferer lying all this time on his back. Sometimes the dungeon was spread with potsherds or broken glass, and they were stretched thereon quite naked, and torn with stripes.* Their wounds were sometimes left to putrify, and they were suffered to die of hunger and thirst. At other times they were well fed, and their wounds carefully dressed; but this was only done to torture them anew.† They were not usually suffered to speak to any one, because it was well known that, in this condition, they converted many unbelievers; even sometimes the very Jailors and soldiers, who guarded them. Sometimes orders were given to admit such as were likely to stagger their constancy; such as a father, a mother, their children, whose tears and endearments were another sort of temptation, and often more dangerous than torments.‡ If a female Martyr was pregnant, the execution was put off by the laws, until she was delivered: And this was the case of St. Felicitas.

* V. Paulin. Nat. 4. Fel.—S. Prud. Peristph. 4. de S. Vincent. & al. † Mart. 16. Apr. de S. Encrat.—Ep. Luciani. ap. Cyp. Ep. 22.—A. S. Mart. Abit. ‡ Act. S. S. Perpet. & Felicit.

The Church, in the meantime, took a particular care of these holy prisoners. The Deacons often visited them, to assist them, to carry their messages, and to afford them all necessary comforts.* Others of the Faithful went likewise to comfort them, and to encourage them to suffer. They blessed their sufferings, and wished to share them with them. They kissed their chains; they dressed their wounds, and brought them whatever they wanted to make their situation more convenient; such as beds, clothes, and refreshments:† So that Tertullian complained that they lived too well in these prisons.‡ The Faithful spared nothing on these occasions. If admittance was refused them, they endeavoured to bribe the guards and the jailors. They were never disheartened at the ill treatment they met with: they put up with abusive language and blows. They waited with patience at the doors of the prisons, even to passing the whole night there, waiting for a favourable moment to gratify their charity. When they could get in, they considered these prisons, consecrated by the presence of Saints, as Churches. They there said prayers, and the Priests went thither to celebrate the Sacrifice, in order to afford the Confessors the consolation of not quitting the world without the protection of the body and blood of JESUS-

* Const. Apost. 5. c. 1.—Cyp. Ep. 11. † A.G. S. S. Perpet. &c. ‡ 2 ad Uxor. c. 4.

CHRIST, as St Cyprian expresses himself.* If it were a Bishop or a Priest that was in prison, the Faithful met there not to lose the opportunity of receiving the Eucharist, and of taking some of it home with them. On these occasions, every contrivance was made use of. Bishops have been seen to consecrate the Eucharist on the hands of the Deacons for want of an altar; and the illustrious Martyr, St Lucian of Antioch, consecrated it on his own breast, being fastened down to the ground in such a manner as not to be able to stir.† One may judge what weight the exhortations must have had, which accompanied these Masses. The whole Church revered these holy prisoners, as almost already crowned Martyrs in heaven. They had such great credit with the Bishops, as to obtain pardon for those, who, through weakness, had fallen into idolatry: So that, at last, it became necessary to set bounds to the recommendations of some of them, who had more zeal than discretion.‡

§ XXII.—CARE of RELICS.

THE Christians followed the Martyrs again to the public Square, where they were tortured, and to the place of execution. These executions were generally performed without the towns; and the greatest part of

* Ep. 5 & 6. † Philost. 3. hist. c. 13. ‡ Cyp. de Laps. Id. Ep. 10, 11, 12, &c.

the Martyrs, after having surmounted their torments, either by a miracle, or by their natural strength, finished their course with having their heads struck off. The Faithful ran in crouds to admire them, and to strengthen themselves by their example. They took particular notice of their last words, which were generally a prayer, like that of St Polycarp, as related in the Epistle of the Church of Smyrna on his Martyrdom:* Or like the hymn of St Athenagoras, an ancient Theologian of the same century, which he sang with joy, when he was just ready to go into the fire, and left in writing to his disciples. Those who were present often also encouraged the Martyrs. Origen frequently exposed his life on these occasions:† And there are several instances of Martyrs, who actually suffered for exhorting others to suffer, as those mentioned in the Epistle of St Dionysius of Alexandria, and in the famous Epistle of the Church of Vienne.‡

The Faithful feared not to draw near to the Martyrs, while on the rack, in order to gather up, with pieces of linen or sponges, the blood which flowed from their wounds, and to preserve it in vials, which they put in their sepulchres. Several women were put to death for having thus gathered drops of St Blasius's blood:§ And when St Cyprian

* Ap. Euf. 4. hist. c. 15.—Martyr. 18. Jan. † Euf. 6. hist. c. 3. ‡ Ap. Euf. 4. hist. c. 34. & 5. hist. c. 1. § Mart. Rom. 3. Feb.

was beheaded, the Faithful had spread linen cloths round about him to receive his blood.* They were not less desirous of carrying off the bodies of the Martyrs, or of collecting the remains of them;† for, very often, nothing remained but some bones or their ashes, as when they had been burnt or devoured by wild beasts; and hence came the name of *Relics*. They spared no expence to purchase them of the executioners, and to bestow on them an honourable funeral. It even often cost them their lives. Some suffered Martyrdom for having only kissed the bodies of the Martyrs; others for preventing any insult being offered them after their death; or for having sought for them or buried them. And some were cast into the common sewers, from whence they had taken the sacred bodies of the Martyrs.‡ St Theodotus, the Inn-keeper, was put to death for having taken out of a pond the bodies of seven virgins, who had been drowned there.|| The disciples of St Ignatius brought back his relics from Rome to Antioch.§

This care of the Relics was the cause of that fury the Heathens shewed in scattering the remains of the bodies of the Martyrs after their deaths: Besides, by so doing, they thought to lessen in the Christians the hopes of a resurrection. “You flatter yourselves,

* Pont. Diac. † V. A& S. Tharaci, S. Bonifacii.

‡ Mart. Rom. 17. Feb. de S. Juliano. 7. Dec. de S. Agathon. 15. Mart. de S. Nicandro. 21. Aug. de S. Paterno. &c. || A& S. Theodoti. § Hier. de Script. Eccles.---Chryst. de S. Ignat.

“ (said they), that your bodies will remain
 “ to the day you expect to receive them a-
 “ gain; and you hope they will be embalm-
 “ ed and wrapped up in costly stuffs, by the
 “ women you have infatuated with your idle
 “ dreams: But we shall take care to prevent
 “ that.”* They therefore gave them to be
 eaten by the beasts, mixed with the bodies
 of gladiators and other criminals: they
 threw them into the water, with large stones
 fastened to them: they burnt them, and
 scattered the ashes in the wind.† But, in
 spite of these precautions, the greatest part
 of the relics were preserved, either by the
 ardent zeal of the Faithful, or by miracles
 which God often wrought on these occa-
 sions. The tombs of the Martyrs began to
 be honoured as soon as their bodies
 were deposited therein. Several Saints suf-
 fered Martyrdom for having been caught
 watching and praying at the sepulchres of
 the Martyrs, or celebrating their feasts,‡
 which the Christians did every year, as Ter-
 tullian and St Cyprian testify:§ And for
 this purpose, the day of their death was
 carefully marked down.

* V. Roma. Soter. l. i. c. 2. &c.—Ep. Eccles. Vienn.
 ap. Euf. 5. hist. c. 1. † Ag. S. Tharac in fine.—
 Prud. de S. Vincent. ‡ Mart. Rom. 17.—Jan. 14.
 Feb.—23. Jan. de S. Emerent. || De coron.—Ep. 34.

§ XXIII. — CONFESSORS.

SUCH as the Persecutors did not choose to put to death, were either simply relegated, or punished with that sort of banishment which the Romans called *deportation*; and which implied a civil death. Persons thus banished, were carried to some island, the least inhabited, or into the countries of the Barbarians, on the frontiers of the Empire. *Relegation* was for persons of great quality; *Deportation* for people of an inferior rank: And, as to those of a still lower class, they were condemned to labour at the public works, and particularly in the mines. These were slaves of the public, commonly marked in the forehead with a hot iron, that they might be known again, if they fled. They had always chains at their feet: they were poorly fed and cloathed, often beaten and used ill.* In a word, their condition was as bad as galley-slaves. The Christians took great care to assist them, and to sooth their sufferings, as far as they could.† All who died for the faith in this condition, were accounted Martyrs: And such as returned from their exile or their slavery, were placed in the rank of *Confessors*: For this name was given to all, who had suffered any punishment for the faith, and in general to

* Cyp. Ep. 77.

† Const. Apost. 5. c. 1, 3.

all who had publicly confessed the faith before the judges. They had great honours paid them during the remainder of their life; and were often promoted to orders by way of recompense. *

XXIV.—EXCOMMUNICATION.

BUT such as had been overcome in the persecution, and had renounced the faith, either through weakness, or the violence of their torments, were called in Latin *Lapsi*, that is to say, fallen; and they were excommunicated, unless they would do public penance. This excommunication consisted not only in being deprived of the sacraments, but in being also debarred the entrance of the Church, and all intercourse with the Faithful. No one would eat with them, or speak to them, but they were shunned like persons stricken with some pestilential disorder. † And St Paul orders bad Christians to be avoided with more care than Heathens themselves, whose company could not be entirely avoided, without quitting the world and life itself. ‡ Thus were treated not only Apostates, that is to say, such as returned to Idolatry, but also heretics, schismatics, and all public sinners: || for there were bad Christians in the best ages of the Church, as

* Cyp. Ep. 38. 40. † Const. Apost. 5. c. 2.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 9. || Orig. in Cels. l. 7.—in Matt. tract.
35.—in Jerem. hom. 9.

St Paul complains to the Corinthians of several, who had not done penance for their impurities; * and to the Philippians of several, whom he calls enemies of Jesus-CHRIST. † These were all separated from the Faithful. Scarce any but the Bishops and Priests could converse with them in order to excite them to repentance, while they saw any hopes thereof: and even when they saw none, they ceased not to pray for them. ‡ Thus were those treated who did not beg to be received to do penance.

XXV.—PENANCE.

AS to those who desired to be admitted to do penance, they were received with great charity, but, at the same time, with great discretion. They were given to understand, that it was a favour, not to be easily granted; and some delay was first used to try if their return was sincere and promised to be lasting. It was the Bishop's place to impose penance for mortal or deadly faults. He was the judge, whether the sinner ought to be admitted to penance; how long it was to last; if it was to be private or public; whether or not the edification of the Church required that the confession itself should be made in public: || for, regularly speaking, it was to be made only in private to a Priest. §

* 2 Cor. xii. 25. † Phil iii. 18. ‡ Ep. Cleri Rom. ad Cyp. Ep. 31. || Conc. Elib. c. 32.

§ Orig. hom. 2. in ps. 38. Socrat. 5. hist. c. 11.

Young people were not easily admitted to penance, on account of the frailty of that age, which gave reason to apprehend that their conversion might not be solid and lasting.* The conversion likewise of those was held suspected, who waited to the last extremity of sickness, before they desired penance; and if they recovered their health, they were obliged to accomplish a canonical penance.†

Many performed public penance, without its being known, in particular, for what sins they did it: and many did penance in private, even for great crimes: such as married women for adulteries unknown to their husbands:‡ and others whose public penance would have caused too great a scandal, or the publication of whose crimes might make them forfeit their lives. || But it was so common a thing to see Christians fast, pray, watch, lie on the ground, even out of pure devotion, that there was no great reason for enquiring why they did so. The duration of the penance was regulated according to the quality of the crimes; but with some difference, according to the practices of the different churches, and according to the times; for the more ancient the penitential canons are, they are, generally, more severe. St Basil fixes two years for theft; seven for

* Leo. Ep. 136. al. 80. Cyp. ad Anton. p. 146.

† Aug. serm. 57. de temp. Conc. Araus. l. c. 3. Oarth. iv. c. 76. 78.

‡ Aug. Ep. 118. ad Jan.—Prosper. 2. Contemp. c. 7.

|| Leo. Ep. 80, & 92. ad Rustic. c. 2.—Bas. ad Amphil. c. 24.

forni-

fornication; eleven for perjury; fifteen for adultery; twenty for murder; and one's whole life for apostasy.*

Such as were ordered to do public penance, came, the first day of Lent, and presented themselves at the Church door, in a poor, dirty, and tattered dress;† for such, among the ancients, was the mourning-dress; and this not only among the Jews, as I have shewn in another work, but also among the Greeks and Romans, even at the close of the fourth century.‡ When they had entered the Church, they received from the hands of the Bishop, ashes on their heads, and sackcloths to cover themselves. They then remained prostrate on the ground, while the Bishop, the Clergy, and all the people offered up prayers for them on their knees. The Bishop made them an exhortation, letting them know, that he was going to drive them out of the Church for a time, as God drove Adam out of Paradise for his sin; encouraging them at the same time, and animating them to labour, in hopes of the mercy of God. He then actually turned them out of the Church, and the doors were immediately shut against them. The penitents, usually, remained shut up at home, and employed themselves in various laborious exercises of penance. They were made to fast

* Ep. 3. Can. ad Amphil. c. 56. 58. 59. 61. 64. 73.

† V. Hier. Epitaph. Fabiol. Sozom. 7. hist. c. 16. Lib. 1. sacr. Rom. Eccles.—Tert. de Pœnit. c. 11.—de Pudic. c. 13. ‡ Chrys. de Compunct. T. 6. p. 150.

every day, or, at least very often, on bread and water; or to practise some other sort of abstinence, according to the nature of their sin, their strength and fervour. They were made to pray a long while together on their knees, or prostrate on the ground; to watch, lie on the floor, and give alms, according to their abilities. During the time of their penance, they not only refrained from all diversions, but also from all company, business, and from all intercourse, even with the Faithful, without great necessity.* They never went from home, but on holidays, or on days of station, when they presented themselves at the Church door; which they continued to do for some time. Afterwards they were admitted within the Church to hear the Lessons and the Sermons; but with a strict charge to depart before the prayers began. Then they were admitted to pray with the Faithful, but prostrate on the ground; and, at last, they were allowed to pray standing, like the rest of the Faithful.† They were likewise distinguished from these in another manner, by being placed on the left-hand in the Church.‡ There were therefore four orders of Penitents; the Weepers, the Hearers, the Prostrate, the Consistents, or such as prayed standing; and the whole time was distributed into these four states. || We find them thus marked

* Lib. Sacram. † Ambr. I. Pœnit. c. 16. Pœnit. Rom. tit. I. c. 11. ‡ I Elig. hom. 8. || Conc. Ancy-

out from the time of St Gregory Thaumaturgus, about the year 260.

For instance, he that had committed wilful murder, was four years among the Weepers, * that is to say, that he came to the Church door at the hours of prayer, and staid without, not under the porch, but in the square, exposed to the injuries of the air. He was clothed with sackcloth, he had ashes on his head, and let his hair and beard grow. † In this condition he besought the Faithful, as they went into the Church, to take pity on him, and to pray for him; and, indeed, the whole Church prayed for the penitents, as it still does during Lent. ‡ The five following years, he was in the rank of Hearers. He came within the Church to hear the instructions; but remained under the Porch with the Catechumens; and went out again, before the prayers began. He from thence passed to the third rank, and prayed with the Faithful; but in the same place as before, near the Church door, prostrate on the pavement, and went out with the Catechumens. After he had been seven years in this state, he passed to the last rank, in which he remained four years, assisting at the prayers of the Faithful, and praying standing like them; but he was not allowed either to make his offering, or go to communion. Lastly, the twenty years of his penance being accomplished, he

* S. Bas. c. 56. † App. ad Ep. S. Greg. Thaum. 6. 1.

‡ Ambr. de Pœnit. l. 1. c. 7. 15. & l. 2. c. 7. 10.

was admitted to the participation of the holy things, that is to say, of the Eucharist. The fifteen years for adultery were spent, proportionately, in the same manner. The Adulterer was four years a Weeper, five years a Hearer, four years a Prostrate, two years a Consistent; and from hence a judgment may be formed of the penance performed by other sorts of sinners. During the whole time of the penance, the Bishop often visited the penitents, or sent some Priest to examine them, and to treat them differently, according to their different dispositions, which he carefully observed.* Some he roused or intimidated; others he comforted and encouraged: he proportioned the remedies to the persons and their diseases. For the Bishops considered the dispensation of penance, as a spiritual medicine. They were persuaded that the healing of souls demanded, at least, as much knowledge as the healing of bodies; and, that vicious habits cannot be destroyed, but by length of time, and an exact regimen.† They took care not to dishearten sinners by an excess of harshness, which, throwing them into despair, might occasion them to return to the world and a heathen life. But, on the other hand, they checked their impatience, knowing how hurtful a hasty absolution is.‡ They granted a perfect reconciliation only to tears, and an effective change of man-

* S. Bas. c. 84. 85. Const. Apost. l. 2. c. 61, &c.

† Chrys. 2. Sacerd.—Ambr. in Ps. 37, & 3. Ep. 19. Greg. Naz. Or. 1.

‡ Cler. Rom. Ep. 51.

ners; but they never granted it to importunities, and much less to threats. Bishops, accustomed to resist the persecutions of the Heathens, were not easily intimidated. Their fundamental maxim was, to labour with all their might in the salvation of the souls of others, but not to lose their own wit, such as were incorrigible.* The penitent, therefore, passed not from one stage of penance to another, but by the Bishop's orders: the length of time alone did not determine his penance. But the time was abridged, if there were any particular reasons for so doing, such as the extraordinary fervour of the penitent, a mortal distemper that seized him, or a persecution breaking out:† for, on all these occasions, great care was taken to let none die without the sacraments.‡ This dispensation, which abridged the regular penance, was called an *Indulgence*; and, during the persecutions, it was often granted at the intreaties of the Confessors, either imprisoned, or in exile. If the penitent died during his penance, before he had received absolution, good hopes of his salvation were, nevertheless, entertained; he was prayed for, and the holy sacrifice was offered for him.¶

When the Bishop thought proper to put an end to the penance, he commonly did it at the close of Lent, to the end that the penitent might be anew to partake of the

* Cyp. Ep. 88. ad Cornel. † Ambr. l. 2. de Penit. Ep. 9.

‡ Cyp. Ep. 51. ¶ Conc. Arel. 11. c. 24. Carthag. iv. c. 29.

sacred mysteries at Easter. On Maundy-Thursday the penitents presented themselves at the Church door. The Bishop, after having said several prayers for them, ordered them to be brought in, at the request of the Archdeacon, who represented to him, that now was a proper time to shew mercy; and that it was but just that the Church should receive the strayed sheep, at the same time that she increased her flock by the new-baptized. The Bishop then made them an exhortation on the mercy of God, and the change they ought then to shew in their lives, and obliged them to hold up their hands as token of the promise they made to do so.* At last, yielding to the prayers of the Church, and persuaded of the sincerity of their conversion, he gave them the solemn absolution. They were then shaved, their hair was cut, they laid aside their penitential dress, and began to live like the rest of the faithful.† There was undoubtedly a great diversity in these outward ceremonies, according to times and places; but they all tended to the same end, and were very effectual towards making people sensible of the enormity of sin, and of the difficulty of arising from it; and towards keeping within the bounds of their duty, even such as had preserved their innocence. “If a man,” says St Augustine, “could easily receive the happiness of his first

* Ord. Rom. 10. n. 1. Lib Sacram. R. Eccles. n. 38.

† S. Elig. hom. 8, & 11.

"state, he would look upon the deadly fall
"into sin as no more than play."*

If the penitent, during the course of his penance, relapsed into any fresh crime, he had to begin his penance again. If it appeared that he profited nothing by his penance, and changed not his course of life, he was continued in the same state, without admitting him to the sacraments. If, after receiving absolution, he fell again into any capital sin, there were no more any sacraments for him: for public penance was granted only once. The church therefore contented herself with praying for him, and to exhort him to his conversion, and to hope in the mercy of God, which has no bounds. In general, where relapses were frequent, the repentance was thought little worth. There were some crimes, for which the penance enjoined, though faithfully performed, continued the whole life of the penitent, and the communion was not granted, but at the hour of death.† Apostates were not admitted to penance, if they delayed to ask for it until they found themselves in danger of death:‡ and though it was granted to other sinners, a repentance, the cause of which appeared to be only the dread of eternal punishment, was little thought of. Those who had once been in the rank of penitents, though they

* Serm. 24. de divers. † Aug. Ep. 54. ad Maced.
c. 7. Past. mund. 4. p. 3. ‡ Cyp. Ep. 53. ad
Anton. Conc. Aurel. 1. c. 22. Clem. 2. Strom. p. 385.

had been absolved and reconciled, were not afterwards capable of receiving orders, or of being raised to any Ecclesiastical ministry: and if a Priest, or any Cleric, committed a sin, which deserved a public penance, he only lost his rank; that is to say, he was for ever interdicted the exercise of his functions, and reduced to the condition of the simple Laics:* but no other penance was enjoined him, not to punish him twice, and out of respect for the sacrament of holy orders.†

If any one be surprized at this ancient discipline, let him reflect, that sins deserving such penance as I have mentioned, were rare, at that time, among the Christians. As people of honour, who have had a good education, and are settled with repute in the world, seldom now commit those crimes, which draw on them the vengeance of the law, and the disgrace of punishment; in like manner, it seldom happened, that Christians, in the choice and admittance of whom such care had been taken, and were so well instructed, should commit adultery, murder, or other crimes deserving of death. The heathens themselves acknowledged, that it was the Christian profession to renounce all criminal pleasures. The Judge reproached St Afra with this; and Origen says, that these crimes were not to be found among Christians.‡ Tertullian maintains that the Ca-

* Conc. Nicæn. c. 2. 10. Carth. iv. c. 68. † Can. Apost. c. 24. ‡ Act. S. Afre. Orig. in Cels. p. 365.

tholics were easily distinguished from the heretics by the difference of their moral conduct; and he boldly upbraids the Heathens, that the prisons were full of only Heathens like themselves, or of Christians who were accused only of being Christians. "If they are accused," adds he, "of any thing else, they are no longer Christians. Innocence is for us a necessity. We are perfectly acquainted with it, having learnt it from God, who is a perfect Master, and we preserve it faithfully, as commanded by that Judge, whom no one can despise."*

§ XXVI.—ASCETES.—VIRGINS.

THERE were some of the Christians, who, without any obligation to do so, voluntarily practised all the exercises of penance, in imitation of the Prophets and of St John the Baptist, inuring themselves to the practices of piety by chastising, as St Paul says of himself, the body, and reducing it to subjection.† They were called *Ascetes*, that is to say, Exercisers. They usually shut themselves up in houses, where they lived in great retirement, observing continence, and, adding to the ordinary frugal and spare diet of the Christians, extraordinary abstinences and fasts. They

* De Praef. c. 41, 42.—Id. Apol. c. 4, 5.

† 2. Tim. iv. 7.—1. Cor. ix. 26.

practised *Xerophagy*, or lived on nothing but dry food; they fasted for two or three days together; or even more. They accustomed themselves to wear hair shirts next their skin, to go bare-footed, to sleep on the ground, to watch the greatest part of the night, constantly to read the holy Scripture, and to pray the most continually they possibly could. Many of these Ascetes became great Bishops and famous Doctors.* Origen led the same life, and makes it as a distinct state among Christians.†

There was a great number of young women who consecrated their virginity to God, either by the advice of their parents, or on their own determination. They led the Ascetic life; and the state of virginity was reckoned as nothing, unless supported by great mortification, by silence, retirement, poverty, labour, fasting, watching, and continual prayer.‡ Those were not held to be true Virgins, who wished still to take any share in even the most innocent worldly diversions, who loved much company, affected to talk in an agreeable manner, and to shew their wit: And much less those, who acted the fine lady, were fond of dress, used perfumes, wore long trains, and walked with an affected air. St Cyprian scarce recommends any thing else to Christian Virgins, than to renounce all vain ornaments of dress, and whatever tended to set-

* Euf. hist. 6. c. 3.—Id. Præp.
25. † S. Hier. Ep. 15. de Ascet.

‡ in Numb. hom.

ting off their persons. He knew how much the younger part of the sex was attached to these trifles, and he perfectly understood the dangerous consequences of them.* In these first ages, the Virgins consecrated to God, lived, for the most part, with their parents; or they lived, two or three together, by themselves. They never went out, but to Church, where they had a place separated from that of the rest of the women. If any of them violated their holy resolution, in order to marry, they were subjected to do penance.†

§ XXVII.—WIDOWS.—DIACONESSES.

WIDOWS, who renounced second marriages, lived nearly like the Virgins; spending their time in fasting, praying, and other practices of the Ascetic life. But they did not confine themselves so much at home, because they applied themselves to exterior works of mercy, such as visiting and comforting the sick and the imprisoned, particularly the Martyrs and Confessors; feeding the poor, receiving and entertaining strangers, burying the dead, and, in general, performing all other works of charity.‡ All the Christian women, whether Widows or married, employed much of their time in this manner, and seldom went out but to

* Cyp. de hab. Virg.

† S. Ambr. ad Virg. laps.

c. 6. ‡ Hier. Epitaph. Paula.

perform such-like good works, or to go to Church.* The Widows, being more at liberty, gave themselves up entirely to these employments: And, if they were rich, they gave large alms; if they were poor, the Church maintained them. The oldest Widows, that is to say, such as were turned of threescore, were chosen for Diaconesses.† This age was afterwards reduced to forty: But always the most discreet and the best tried were chosen for performing these acts of charity. This employment was also sometimes given to Virgins; and they then likewise had the name of Widows given them.‡ The Diaconesses received the imposition of hands, and were reckoned among the Clergy, because they exercised, with regard to women, a part of the functions of the Deacons.†

Their charge was to visit all those of their sex, whom either poverty, or sickness, or other misfortunes, rendered objects worthy to be taken care of by the Church. They instructed the Catechumens of their own sex, or rather repeated to them the Catechetical Instructions which had been given them before. They presented them to baptism, helped them to undress and to dress themselves again, that the Priest's might not see them in an unbecoming state.¶ They had

* Tert. 2. ad Uxor. c. 4.—Id. de cult. femin. c. 11.
 † 1. Tim. v. 9.—Const. Apost. l. 3. ‡ Const. Apost.
 l. 6. 19. & lib. 7. c. 19.—Tert. de Vel. Virg. c. 9.
 ¶ Conc. Nican. c. 17.—Calch. c. 15.—Epiph. har. 79. n. 3.

afterwards the direction of these new baptized females for some time, in order to train them up to a Christian life. In the Church they were the Door-keepers on the women's side, and took care that each one was placed in her prayer rank, and observed silence and modesty of behaviour. The Diaconesses gave the Bishop an account of all their functions, and, by his orders, gave the Priests and Deacons the same. The chief use of them was to inform the latter of the wants of the other women, and to do towards them, what the Priests and Deacons could not do with so much decency themselves.

It required great patience in the Bishops, and great discretion to govern all these women; to keep the Diaconesses in the sobriety and activity necessary for their functions, but difficult at their time of life; to prevent them from becoming either too easy or too credulous, restless, curious, malicious, passionate and severe to an excess. Care was to be taken, lest, under the pretext of Catechizing, they should affect to shew their learning and wit; that they spoke not indiscreetly of the Mysteries, or sowed the seeds of any errors or fables; that they were not great talkers or dissipated.* It required, moreover, great charity to cure or bear with the defects of the other Widows and the rest of the women, such as dejection of

* Const. Apost. l. 3. c. 5, 6, 7.

mind, jealousy, envy, back-biting, and murmuring even against the Pastors themselves.* In a word, all the evils which commonly follow from the weakness of the sex, and from age, especially when it is joined with poverty, sickness, or any other incommo-
dity.

§ XXVIII.—CARE of the Poor.

THE Church took care of all the Poor, of whatever age or sex. But such as were able to work, were not considered as poor, because they had it in their power not to be burdensome to any one, or even to assist others.† For it was then thought that a good Christian ought not to content himself with working for his own maintenance; but that he ought also to contribute to the maintenance of those who could not work.‡ The civil law, moreover, had made provision against lusty beggars and vagrants.¶ For as slavery was then in use, if these beggars were freemen, they were affixed to certain lands, as slaves to the public. § And if they were slaves, they were abandoned to any one who had a mind to lay hold of them. ¶ The same was the case with regard to exposed children. They became the pro-

* Chrys. l. 3. de sacerdot. † Const. Apost. l. 2. 24. & l. 4. c. 12, &c. ‡ Orig. in Matt. tr. 31. S. Bas. Reg. fus. 426. ¶ L. 7. Cod. de Mend. Valid. l. 11. § Colonatu perpetuo fulciatur.

perty of those who undertook to maintain them.* Thus there were few other beggars besides old slaves, whose masters were inhuman enough to abandon them, when they could no longer be of any service, as being blind, lame, or otherwise maimed.

These, therefore, were the objects the Church took care of; and Prudentius describes them, when he represents those whom St Laurence shewed to the Prefect of Rome, as the treasures of the Church.† They took likewise great care of the children; in the first place, of the orphan children of Christians, and especially of those of the Martyrs. Next they took care of children exposed, and of all they could be masters of, in order to bring them up in the true religion.‡ All this care of the poor aimed at procuring them spiritual good things by bestowing on them those that were temporal. For this reason, a preference was always given to Christians before Heathens; and among Christians, to the most virtuous; but the incorrigible were abandoned. Alms were not indiscriminately received of all sorts of people. Those of persons excommunicated, and of public sinners, were refused, as were those of Usurers, Adulterers, and bad women.¶ They rather chose to expose the poor to the want of necessaries; or rather they trusted in divine Providence,

* Argum. l. 3. Cod. de Inf. expof. † Peristeph. l. 2.

‡ Const. Apost. l. 4. c. 2. A. S. S. Perp. & Felicit.

¶ Const. Apost. l. 4. c. 5, 6, 7, 9. A. S. S. Afræ.

which

which could provide for them by other means.

Each Church raised a considerable fund for the maintenance of the poor, for hospitality, or the entertainment of strangers, for burials and other common expences; such as the support of the Clergy, the lights burnt in the Church, and the sacred vessels.* The Church of Rome, under the Pope St Cornelius, about the year two hundred and fifty, maintained one hundred and fifty-four Clerics, and above fifteen hundred poor. And from its foundation, while the persecutions lasted, she took care to make large remittances to succour the poor Churches in the provinces, and to the Confessors condemned to the mines.† These riches, which in common belonged to the Churches during the three first centuries, scarce consisted of any thing but moveables, eatables, clothes, ready money, which arose from the offerings of the Faithful, every week, or every month, or whenever they were disposed to make their offerings; for there was nothing either fixed or forced in these offerings.‡

It was however recommended, as a duty of religion, to bestow on the Church the first-fruits and the tithes of the produce of the earth and of the cattle, for the subsistence of the Clergy and of the poor. Ori-

* Baron. an. 44. n. 68. &c. Just. I. Apol.—Tert. Apol. c. 39. † Euf. 4. hist. c. 43. Ep. Dion. Corinth. ap. Euf. ib. c. 23. ‡ Act. Colon. Cirtens. an. 304. Tert. Apol. c. 39.

gen maintains that the old law is still obligatory in this point, being rather confirmed, than abolished by the Gospel.* Only we do not find that those who failed herein, were then proceeded against by censures. These offerings were carried home either to the Bishop or to the Deacons; and it was forbidden to offer any thing on the altar besides the bread and wine, which were to be the matter of the sacrifice.† The Churches had immoveables even in the times of the persecutions; since when they ceased, restitution was ordered to be made of them. This we see by the Edict of Constantine and Licinius.‡

Such were the treasures of the Church, of which the Heathens were so greedy, and which were among the causes of the persecutions, as we see in the instance of St Laurence. The care of them was intrusted to the Deacons. It was one part of their employment to receive whatever was offered for the common necessities of the Church; to lay by these offerings, to keep them safely, and to distribute them according to the orders of the Bishop, which he gave from the information he received of the wants of each particular person. || It was therefore another part of their duty to inquire into these wants, to keep an exact register both of the Clergy, and of the Virgins,

* Hom. 2. in Numb.—5. in Jos. † Can. Apost. 3, 4.
 ‡ Lact. de Mort. Persec. n. 45.—Euf. 10 hist. c. 3.
 § Prud. Peristeph. Hymn. 2.—V. Baron, an. 34. n. 227.
 § Const. Apost. l. 3. c. 19.

Widows, and poor maintained by the Church. It was their duty to examine the fresh ones who presented themselves; to watch over the conduct of such as had been already admitted; to see if they were worthy to receive assistance. It was their duty to provide lodgings for strangers, and to know by whom, and how the expences were to be paid. * The Laity addressed themselves to the Deacons, whenever they wanted to ask any thing of the Bishop, or to give him any information, whom they did not so freely approach, out of respect, or for fear of troubling him. Thus the life of the Deacons was a stirring, active life. They were obliged to go often up and down the town, and sometimes even to go journies abroad; and, for this reason, they did not wear either clokes or large garments, like the Priests; but only Tunics and Dalmatics, to be fitter for action and motion. †

§ XXIX.—HOSPITALITY.

Hospitality was usually practised even among the Heathens one towards another. Among the Greeks and Romans, the better sort of people seldom went to public Inns. In the towns, whither their business might call them, they had friends who entertained them, and who, in their turn, lodged with them, when they came to their town.* This

* Const. Apost. l. 3. c. 19.
2. c. 57.

† Const. Apost. lib.

law was perpetuated in families: it was one of the bands of friendship among the cities of Greece and Italy; and was afterwards extended all over the Roman empire. This law was considered as appertaining to their religion. Jupiter, said they, presided over it; the person of the guest, and the table where they eat with him, were sacred. The Jews, on their side, considered it as a good work, practised all along by the Saints; and they still practise it towards one another.

We must not therefore be surprised, if the Christians practised hospitality towards one another, who considered themselves all as friends and brethren; and knew that JESUS-CHRIST had recommended it, as one of the most meritorious works.† Provided that a stranger could shew that he professed the orthodox faith, and was in the communion of the Church, he was received with open arms. Whoever had thought of refusing him his house, would have feared that he had rejected JESUS-CHRIST himself: but then he must make himself known to be such. For this purpose, whenever any Christian went from home, he took letters from his Bishop, and these letters had certain marks, known only to the Christians. They shewed the state of life of the traveller; if he were a Cleric; if, after having been a heretic, or excommunicated, he had been reconciled to the Church; if he were a Catechumen or Penitent; if he

* Q. Thomass. Tessera hospit.

† Matt. xxv. 34.

were a Cleric, and in what rank; for even the Clergy went not from home without dimissorial letters from their Bishop. * There were likewise letters of recommendation to distinguished persons of merit, such as Confessors, or Doctors, or such as stood in need of any particular assistance. †

The first act of hospitality was to wash the feet of the guests. We see this practice in several passages of the scripture; and this comfort was necessary, seeing the manner in which the feet of the ancients were covered. Hence in St Paul the action of washing the feet, is joined with hospitality. ‡ If the guest was in full communion of the Church, they prayed with him, and the doing all the honours of the house was turned over to him; such as performing prayer, having the first place at table, and instructing the family. It was thought a happiness to have his company: the meal of which he partook, was esteemed more holy. Clerics were honoured in proportion to their rank; and, if a Bishop travelled, he was every where invited to perform the service and to preach, in order to shew the Unity of the priesthood and of the church. || It was thus St Anacetus behaved towards St Polycarp. § There have been Saints, to whom hospitality exercised towards Clerics and others, who came to preach the Gospel, became the occasion of

* V. Baron. An. 142. n. 7. † Conc. Elib. c. 38.

‡ Tim. v. 10.

|| Const. Apost. 2. c. 58.

§ Euf. 4. hist. c. 14.

their

their martyrdom, as is related of the famous St Alban in England, * and of St Gervase at Amiens. † The Christians exercised hospitality even towards the Heathens. Thus they executed, with great charity, the orders of the Prince, who obliged them to lodge the military, the officers and others, who travelled for the service of the state, and to furnish them with provisions. ‡ St Pacomius, having been engaged, when very young, in the Roman army, was embarked with his company, and landed in a town, where he was surprized to see the inhabitants receive them with as much affection, as if they had been their old friends and acquaintances. He asked who these people were, and he was told that they were a people, who had a particular religion of their own, and were called Christians. He, from that moment, informed himself of their doctrine, and this was the beginning of his conversion. †

§ XXXI.—Care of the Sick.

THE Christians took great care to visit the sick, a thing so much recommended in the Gospel. ¶ When Alexandria was afflicted with a cruel pestilence, in the time of the Emperor Valerian, they took advantage of that opportunity to shew their charity towards their persecutors, and they assisted the

* Mart. 22. Jun. † Ibid. 11. Decemb.

‡ Vit. S. Pacomii. § Matt. xxv. 36.

§ Dion. Alex. ap. Euf. 7. hist. c. 22.

sick with such generosity, that many, both of the Clergy and the Laity, died of the distemper, and were honoured as martyrs.* The Priests attended the sick Christians to comfort them, to pray for them, and administer the sacraments to them. The Viaticum was given under the species of bread alone, and might be carried by a layman, in a case of necessity, as appears from the history of the old man, Serapion.† Besides the Unction of the sacred oil, prescribed by St James,‡ they often cured the sick by the application of another blessed oil, which was indifferently given to believers and unbelievers, by Clerics or laymen, according as they had received the gift of miracles.¶ Sometimes the oil which burnt before the sepulchres of the Martyrs was used for this purpose. The Heathens having no hopes after death, considered it merely as an evil, which deprived them of the good things of this life; or as an annihilation, which delivered them from all their evils. Scarce any body now believed what the Poets related of the punishments and rewards of another life. § They never thought therefore of exhorting dying persons, but of diverting them; and they on their side laboured to prolong the pleasures of life as far as possible. Their

* Martyrol. R. 28 Feb.

† Euseb. 6. hist. c. 44.

‡ James v. 14.

¶ V. Baron. An. 63. n. 16.

§ Adeone me delirare censes, ut ista credam? Cic. Tuscul. Quæst. 1. 1. n. 6. Nec pueri credunt. Juvenal.

maxim was, that related by St Paul, after
Isaias: *let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we
shall die.* * This is the end of all the moral
precepts of Horace. The death of Petroni-
us under Nero is the strongest instance of
this which I know. † Those of a more seri-
ous turn, solaced themselves with Philoso-
phy, and sought to die with tranquillity.

The maxims of the Christians being quite
different, they considered death as nothing
else, but as the gate of eternity. Thus, as
most of them led good lives, they wished for
it more than they dreaded it, and they were
less afflicted with the sensible loss of their re-
lations and friends, than they rejoiced at
their eternal happiness, and at the hopes of
seeing them again in heaven. They count-
ed their death only as a sleep, according to
the language of the scriptures; ‡ and hence
comes the name of *Cemetery*, which, in
Greek, signifies a Dormitory, or common
sleeping-room.

§ XXXI. — BURIALS.

THE better to testify their faith of a resur-
rection, they took great care of funerals,
and were at a great expence about them, in
proportion to their way of living. They
did not burn the bodies, like the Greeks and
Romans: nor did they approve of the su-

* If. xxi. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 32. † Tacit. ann. 16.

‡ Dormivit cum patribus suis. 3 Kings ii. 10: xi. 40:
xiv. 20, &c.

perstitious curiosity of the Egyptians, who kept them embalmed, and exposed to view on beds in their houses. St Antony attacked this custom, which still continued in his time.

The Christians buried the dead like the Jews. After having washed them, they embalmed them, and employed therein more perfumes, says Tertullian, than the Heathens did in their sacrifices. † They wrapped them up in very fine linen, or silken stuffs; sometimes they clothed them with costly garments. They left them exposed for three days, taking great care to watch by them all the time, and so spend the night by them in prayer. Afterwards they carried them to the grave with wax-tapers and torches, singing psalms and hymns, to praise God, and to express the hopes of a resurrection. They likewise prayed for them, the sacrifice was offered for them, and an entertainment, which they called *Agape*, was made for the poor; and other alms were also given. ‡ The memory of them was renewed at the end of the year, besides the commemoration made of them every day in the holy sacrifice. ||

The Church had officers appointed for the interments, whom they called Diggers, or Labourers; and who are sometimes found reckoned among the Clergy. § Often differ-

* Vit. S. Antonii. c. 31. † V. Baron. An 34. n. 370, &c. Apol. c. 42. ‡ Const. Apost. l. 6. c. ult. l. 7. c. 41. 42. Prud. hymn in exeq. || Tert. de Cor. mil. c. 3. Orig. in Job. hom 3. Cyp. Ep. 66. § Possiores, Laborantes, Copiatæ. V. Baron. An 14. n. 288.

ent things were buried with the bodies, to honour the defunct, or to preserve their memory; such as the marks of their dignity, the instruments of their martyrdom, vials or sponges filled with their blood, the Acts of their martyrdom, their epitaph, or at least their name, medals, leaves of laurel, or some other ever-green, crosses, or the Gospel. They observed to lay the corps on the back, with the face turned towards the East.* The Heathens, in order to preserve the ashes of the dead, built magnificent sepulchres on the sides of the high roads, and every where else in the country. The Christians, on the contrary, concealed the bodies, simply interring them, or ranging them in vaults, such as are, in the neighbourhood of Rome, the tombs or catacombs.

These were subterraneous places cut out in a soft sandy-stone, or contrived in the veins of sand, which the Christians made their cœmeteries. Stairs led down into them, and there are long streets, which, on each side, have two or three rows of deep niches, where the bodies were deposited formerly; for now most of them have been taken away. From space to space are spacious rooms, vaulted over and built with the same solidity, with several niches in them, like those in the streets. Most of these chambers are painted with different histories of the old and new Testament, as the Churches were; and in some of these cœmeteries there are subter-

* Thomas. Discip.

aneous Churches. In several of them have been found chests of marble, adorned with figures in relief, representing the same histories as the paintings. These were tombs for persons of the greatest distinction. Each of these cœmeteries is like a large suburb underground, and some are two or three stories deep. And indeed the Christians here found pretty secure retreats, in the times of persecution, to preserve the relics of the martyrs, to meet together, and to celebrate the different parts of the divine service. These cœmeteries had remained unknown for a long time, and the entrances into them had been shut up, and they were only discovered since the close of the sixteenth century. These places are sometimes called the Council of the Martyrs, because their bodies were there assembled together; and sometimes *Arenaria*, on account of the sandy soil. In Africa the cœmeteries were also sometimes called *Aræ*, or barn-floors.

Christians, at all times, have had a great devotion to be buried near the Martyrs; and this introduced so many burying places in the Churches, though the custom of burying nowhere but without the towns was long observed. The veneration for Relics, and a distinct belief of the resurrection, had totally taken from the Christians the horror which the ancients, even the Israelites them-

* Baron ad Martyr. 3. Jan.—23. Jun.—13. Sept.

† Thomass. Discipl. P. I. lib. I. c. 55. n. II.

selves, had for dead bodies and burying places.

§ XXXII.—BISHOPS.—CLERGY.

TO finish the picture of these first ages, I must yet say a word or two of the Pastors and Ministers of the Church. Origen, comparing the town-meetings to those of the Christians in their Churches, says, as of a thing that was evident, that those who presided in the Churches, have really that virtue and merit, of which the others have only the name.* And this he says in his work against Celsus, disputing with the Heathens, to whom he must have made himself ridiculous, if it had not been an evident truth. The great number of Bishops, who succeeded one another, in the three first ages, at Rome and Jerusalem, gives room to believe, that most of them suffered Martyrdom; and, to the year nine hundred, there were not above three or four Popes, who are not reckoned among the Saints.—Most of the Bishops, mentioned in history during the three first centuries, are remarkable for their virtue: And therefore the Emperor Alexander Severus proposed the example of the Christians, to shew with what care public Officers ought to be examined. Those were chosen among the Christians, such as I have endeavoured to describe them,

* In Cels, lib. 3. p. 130.

whose sanctity was the most conspicuous, and whose virtue had been most tried. It was the ordinary recompense of the Confessors, who had shewn the greatest constancy while tortured.—Such were Aurelius and Severinus, whom St Cyprian made Readers.* The latter had several scars on his body, besides that his grand-mother and both his uncles had been illustrious Martyrs. Such was the Priest Numidicus, who, after having made many Martyrs by his exhortations, and his own wife among others, had himself been left for dead.

The Bishops chose those who were to be associated to the Clergy often at the request of the people; or, at least, with their participation, and always by the advice of his Clergy; and after having carefully examined them with the most able of his Priests, to see if they had the qualifications requisite.† But little regard was paid to the will of those who were to be ordained.‡ They not only did not wait until they desired orders, they often ordained them against their will, by force or by artifice; so that there were some, who never could prevail on themselves to exercise their functions. The Bishop was chosen, in the presence of the people, by the Bishops of the province, assembled in the vacant Church, to the number, at least, of two or three;|| for it was difficult, in these

* Tert. Apol. c. 39.—Orig. in Cels. lib. 8. in fin.—Cyp. Ep. 33. 34. 35. † Cyp. Ep. 35. ‡ Id. Ep. 29. ad Cler. || Cyp. Ep. 68.—Can. Apost. 7, c. 4, &c.—Orig. in Lev. hom. 6.—Can. Nicæn.

times to hold any great Councils, except in the intervals of the persecutions: And sometimes many of the Churches remained for a long time vacant. The presence of the people was judged necessary, that all being persuaded of the merit of the elect, they might obey him more readily.* For usually they chose only such as had been baptized in the same Church, and had exercised therein, for several years, all the ecclesiastical functions. The Ordinations were always preceded by a fast, and accompanied with prayers. They were generally performed in the night between Saturday and Sunday. This night was spent in watching; then Ordination was given, the principal ceremony of which has always been the laying on of hands; and that was followed by the sacrifice.†

The Bishop never ordained any more Priests or Deacons, or any others of the Clergy, than those he precisely wanted for the service of his own Church, that is, his Diocese. The number was not great, since, in the time of St Cornelius, the year of Christ 250, the Roman Church had no more than sixty-six Priests, and, in all, one hundred and fifty-four Clerics, although the multitude of the people was innumerable.‡ The number of Bishops was, in proportion, much greater: As there was one in every town, where there was any reasonable number of Christians. It was forbidden to or-

* Greg. Turon. 10 hist. c. 3. † V. Baron. An.
44. n. 74. ‡ Euf. 6. hist. c. 43. || Conc. Elib. c. 24.

tain in one province those who had been baptized in another, because their life was not there known.* For they reckoned not the time before baptism. After Ordination the Clerics were obliged not only to residence, but to remain in the same place for the rest of their lives, unless their Bishop gave them up to another: For they depended entirely on him, as Disciples whom he took care to instruct, to train, and to promote from one degree to another, to apply them to different functions, according to their talents. The young Martyrs who suffered with St Babilas, with St Blasius, and other Saints, were probably some of those whom they were bringing up to be of the Clergy.† None of the Clergy, therefore, whom any one Bishop had ordained, could quit him without his leave, to go and serve under another: And he who received him, would have been reprimanded as guilty of a sort of theft.‡

This authority of the Bishops over their Clergy was far from being any kind of lordship over them, or using a despotic power:§ It was a government of charity. The Clergy shared in the Bishop's power, since he did nothing of importance without their advice.¶ Above all, he consulted the Priests, who were, as it might be, the senate of the Church. They were so venerable, and the

* Conc. Elib. c. 24. † Martyrol. 25. Jan. 3. Feb. 30. Apr. 21. Maii de S. Valente. ‡ Can. Apost. 14. Can Nicæn. § Orig. in Matt. xx. 25. || 1. Pet. v. 3.

Bishops so humble, that outwardly there was little difference between them. The Clergy had a sort of authority over the Bishop himself, being the continual inspectors of his doctrine and morals.* They assisted him in all public functions, like the officers of the Magistrates, or rather like Disciples who follow their master; for they were as attached to him, as the Apostles were to JESUS-CHRIST.† If, therefore, the Bishop had attempted to teach or do any thing contrary to Apostolic tradition, the elder Priests and the elder Deacons would not have suffered it. They would charitably have admonished him of it; and if he were no better for their advice, they would have complained to the other Bishops, and would lastly have accused him in a Council.

Most of the Clergy led the Ascetic life, using only pulse and dry meats, often fasting and practising other austerities, as much as the toil of their functions would allow them. Above all, Continence was strongly recommended to Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Not but that married men were often raised to these orders: For where could not be found among the Jews and Heathens, who were converted every day, men who had observed continency to an age of maturity? It was very much to find any who had had but one wife,‡ considering the liberty the Jews and other Orientals had of having many at a time,

* Const. Apost. lib. 2. c. 28.

† Ib. lib. 8. c. 12.

‡ 1. Tim. iii. 1.

and the universal custom of divorce, which gave an opportunity of often changing. But when he, who was made Bishop, had a wife still living, he began from that time to look upon her as a sister; and the Latin Church has all along made Priests and Deacons observe the same discipline.* They were however commanded to take care of their wives, and not to abandon them like strangers; and they were sometimes called Priestesses, on account of the dignity of their husbands.†

The Clergy were not allowed to have women to lodge in the house with them. Among the accusations brought against Paul of Samosata, it is said that he kept in the house with him two women, young and well made, and that he made them follow him, wherever he went; and that he suffered his Priests and his Deacons to entertain in like manner those sort of women that were called *Subintroductæ*.‡ The Bishop Pomponius complained to St Cyprian of certain Virgins, who pretended to preserve their integrity, while they lived with men, and even with a Deacon, in so scandalous a familiarity as to have the same bed.¶ This abuse had crept in under the pretext of charity; for those who thus lived with Clergymen, were Virgins consecrated to God, or others who made a profession of devotion, with respect

* Conc. Elib. c. 33.—Ep. Decret. Siricii ad Himer. c. 7.

† Presbyteræ. Episcopæ.

‡ Subintroductæ. Agopetæ.

¶ Cyp. Ep. 62.

to whom these Clergymen were to be in the place of Fathers or Brothers, taking care of their concerns, and doing for them what decency did not allow them to do for themselves, especially in countries where women seldom appeared in public. These Devotees, on their part, rendered every domestic service to their brethren, which agreed with the character of their profession: For they pretended not less to observe continency for living together; and when St Chrysostome attacks this abuse, he supposes they observed it. He only accuses them of a fondness for the pleasure of seeing one another, and talking with one another, which is more sensible between persons of a different sex, and of leading a scandalous and indecent life, and of exposing themselves rashly to the danger of falling into sin.* To cut off this disorder, the Clergy, who were not married, were forbidden all cohabitation with women who were not relations,† which the Council of Nice reduced to Sisters, Mothers, and Aunts.‡

The practice of the Church was not quite uniform in this article of Celibacy. St Jerome|| says, that the Churches of the East, of Egypt, and of the Apostolic See, took for their Clergy either those who were Virgins or were Continent; and that if they had wives, they ceased to be husbands. Here then are the three great Patriarchates,

* In eos qui tenent sabintrod. † V. Thomass. p. 1. lib. c. 4. n. 9. ‡ Conc. Nican. c. 3. || In Vigil. c. 2.

Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. St Epiphanius says, that it is a rule of the Church, exactly observed, not to ordain persons who had been twice married, although they had not married the second wife till after the death of the first: that he, who had been married even but once, is not to be admitted to the order of Deacon, Priest, Bishop, or Subdeacon, while his wife is living, unless he keep from her, especially where the canons are most exactly observed: For he acknowledges, that in some places, there were Priests, Deacons, and Subdeacons, who used marriage. "This practice," says he, "is not conformable to the rule, but to the weakness of men, who grow slack, where is an opportunity; and on account of the multitude, for whom Ministers would be wanting."*

In time, these rules of continency were much relaxed in Greece and in the East: But in no part of the Catholic Church, was a Priest ever allowed to marry after his ordination.† If he did it, in punishment of his incontinency, he was reduced to the state of a simple Laic. As to the inferior Clergy, such as Readers and Door-keepers, they were commonly married, and cohabited with their wives. Many, therefore, passed their lives in these orders; or, at least, they remained therein many years, during which time, their wives might either die, or they

* Har. 59, Cathar, n. 4.

† Can. Nican. c. 1.
might

might separate by mutual consent, in order to lead a more perfect life.

All the Clergy, even to the Bishops, lived in poverty, or, at least, in a plain, frugal manner, like common men, without any exterior distinction. The Judge, when he interrogated St Sabinus, Bishop of Assisium, asked him whether he were a freeman or a slave? * As they were the most sought after in the times of persecution, they took care not to distinguish themselves by their dress, or by any other mark of their profession: they appeared, at most, like Philosophers. Many had distributed to the poor their patrimony, before they were raised to orders. Many, following the example of St Paul, continued to live by the labour of their hands, after their ordination. Not but that they might have lived at the expence of the Church. She furnished out of her treasury, whatever was necessary for the subsistence of her Clergy; and each one received, monthly or weekly, a certain distribution in kind, or in money, according to his wants or rank: For the allowances to the Clergy, the highest in dignity, and consequently burdened with greater labour, were greater, agreeable to the precept of St Paul. † There were some also who kept their patrimony. St Cyprian, at the time of his Martyrdom, had some gardens, and a house of his own. They were allowed to follow some traffic,

* Act. S. Sabin. † 1. Tim. v. 17.

provided it did not engage them to travel out of the Province.*

The Bishops and the Clergy rendered themselves no less amiable for their charity and their application to study, than venerable for their other virtues. The Bishops never failed to preside at the public prayers, to explain the holy Scriptures, to offer the Sacrifice every Sunday, or on the days of station. He and his Priests were constantly employed in instructing the Catechumens, comforting the sick, exhorting the Penitents, reconciling enemies. They settled all differences: For the Christians were not allowed, what St Paul had forbidden, to carry their causes before the tribunals of Unbelievers; and such as would not submit to the decision of the Bishop, were excommunicated, as impenitent and incorrigible sinners.† But differences were rare among such disinterested, humble, and patient Christians as they were. Monday was usually the day the Bishops chose for examining into disputes, to the end that, if the parties did not immediately acquiesce to the sentence of the Bishops, he might have time to pacify them, and to make them hear reason, before the following Sunday, when they were all to pray together, and receive the communion.‡ The Bishop was seated with his Priests, assisted by Deacons, and the parties standing

* Conc. Elib. c. 18. † Const. Apost. lib. 2. 45, 46.
—1. Cor. vi.—V. Patres ap. Bar. an. 57. n. 37, 38, &c.
—Tert. Apol. c. 39. ‡ Const. Apost. ib.

in the middle. After hearing them, he did all in his power to make them agree amicably, and to reconcile them, before he pronounced judgment. Complaints were also there received against those who did not lead Christian lives. The Bishop did not judge alone, but in conjunction with his priests.*

He had the sovereign disposal of the whole treasure of the Church, and there was no apprehension of his abusing this power. If the least suspicion had been entertained of his honesty, they never would have trusted him with the government of souls, which are, beyond all comparison, of more value than all the treasures of the world. † All, therefore, who wanted assistance, applied to him: he was the Father of all the poor, and the refuge of all in want.

Who then, after this, can wonder at the affection the Faithful shewed the Bishops? It is observed of St Polycarp, that they strove who should be the first to take off his shoes. ‡ It was a common thing to fall prostrate before the Priests, when they approached them, and to kiss their feet, while they waited for their blessing. They looked upon it as a happiness to lodge even a Deacon, and to have him at table. No business of importance was undertaken without the advice of the Pastor, who was the only Director of all his flock. He was considered as the man of God, as he who held the place

* Const. Apost. lib. 12.

Cyp. Ep. 28.

† Ep. Eccles. smyrn.

of JESUS-CHRIST, so that vanity or a contempt of others, was the temptation most to be feared by the Bishops and Priests, as it was with regard to those who had the gift of prophecy or of miracles: for these graces were still frequent. It was this respect, and this filial love, that made the whole power of the pastors. For they had no way to procure obedience, but the way of persuasion, and spiritual punishments. They could use no other constraint than to intimidate the conscience: and such as were so impious as to despise their censures, underwent no temporal punishment whatever.

XXXIII.—PATIENCE of the CHRISTIANS.

SUCH nearly were the manners of the Christians, while heathenism prevailed, and the persecutions continued. This state obliged them, in general, to be extremely vigilant, and continually attentive to God, and their own conduct. For, as soon as the persecution broke out, each one expected either to be denounced by his wife, or his nearest relations, greedy of what he had, or passionately attached to idolatry.* It was a certain method for those who were indebted to them, to cancel their debts, and for their slaves to obtain their freedom.† As soon as a Heathen fell in love with a young woman that was a Christian, he could reduce her to

* Hier. Vit. Paul. init.
Julitt. Pallad. hist. laus. c. 3.

† Bas. Orat. 5. in S.

the cruel necessity of either abandoning herself to his lust, or exposing herself to torments. St Justin relates that a wife was informed against by her husband, because she would no longer share in his crimes; and that a man was punished with death, for having dared to ask the Judge, why he put to death, for the bare name of Christian, the man who had made a convert of this woman.* When the Church had been some time in peace, there was reason, every day, to fear that war would break out again; and this peace was never so complete, but that several Christians suffered in some popular emotions, or other ways: for we see a great number of martyrs under the Emperor Alexander, and under others, who never raised any persecution against them. St Melito complains to the Emperor Antoninus, that the Christians were plundered and robbed with impunity, both in the night, and in open day, under pretence of some ordinances, unknown to the Emperor.† At least, if torments and acts of violence ceased, hatred and contempt never ceased. It was, at all times, allowed to abuse the Christians; to write against them, and to introduce them on the stage. All this was not only done with impunity, but was approved of and authorized; and the passages alone in Celsus, transcribed by Origen, shew us with what indignity they were treated. They could not avoid seeing, every day, the profane ceremonies of the Heathens; meet-

* Apol. 2. init.

† Ep. Euf. 4. hist. c. 26.

ing every where the most obscene statues, and public stews; hearing, on all sides, impious and dissolute discourses. Strength and resolution of heart were requisite to preserve, in the midst of so many obstacles, so lively a faith, and such purity of manners. Those Christians, therefore, were treated as weak ones, whose faith was shaken by words, or the arguments of Philosophers. *

They stood also in need of great discretion, to restrain, within just bounds, that liberty of the children of God, and that boldness grounded on the testimony of a good conscience. † They knew how to despise ill-grounded contempt, and the most unjust calumnies, without raising a mutiny against their calumniators, without murmuring against them, without hating them. They were extremely cautious of doing any thing that might draw down, or increase the violence of the persecution. ‡ They endeavoured, to the utmost of their power, to keep peace with all men, and to lead such good lives, as might stop the mouths of the indiscreet, foolish and ignorant. || They refrained from every thing that did not necessarily appertain to piety, and which might exasperate the Heathens, and studied, by every means, to gain their hearts. The Christians had a sufficient number of practices, which necessarily distinguished them from others, without affecting any super-

* Clem. 6. Strom. p. 655. Orig. in Cels. init.

† 1 Pet. ii. 16. ‡ Cyp. Ep. 5. 36.

|| Rom. xii. 18. 1 Pet. II. 15.

fluuous singularities. They, therefore, outwardly lived like other Romans, other Greeks, and the inhabitants of the countries where they were, in whatever was not contrary to their religion and good morals.* They shewed no eagerness for disputing with, or preaching to, such as they found not disposed to hear them. They contented themselves with praying for them, and with edifying them by their patience and good works, ever returning them good for evil. St Ignatius, speaking of the soldiers who guarded him: "I am," says he, "chained to ten leopards, who become worse for doing them a kindness; but their wicked disposition is my instruction."† St Polycarp received, with a cheerful countenance, those who came to take him; he gave them a supper and lodgings with great civility.‡ St Cyprian ordered his executioner five and twenty pieces of gold. St Maximilian gave his a new suit of clothes. Another ancient Martyr, accused of being a Christian, and put in prison, and then set at liberty, sold all he had, and gave the money partly to the poor, and partly to his accusers, considering them as his benefactors. || Another, called Paul, being condemned to lose his head, requested a little time to pray; and then prayed for his

* Aug. contra Faust. l. 20. c. ult. Tert. Apol. c. 41.

† Ep. ad Rom.

‡ Ep. Eccles. smyrn.

§ Act. S. Cypr. Act. S. Maximil, Martyr. 7. Sept. the S. Eutychio.

relations, for the Jews, for the Gentiles, for all that were present; lastly for the Judge who had condemned him, and the executioner who was to put him to death. *

Their patience shone the brightest chiefly with regard to the Princes and Magistrates of the age. They never were heard to complain of the government, or speak with contempt of the powers in being. They rendered them all the honour and obedience, which did not engage them in any act of idolatry. They paid the taxes, not only without resistance, but without murmuring: and rather than use any fraud to avoid paying them, they gave what they gained by their labour, to supply their deficiency. †

Far from exciting any seditions or rebellions, they never had any share in all the conspiracies that were formed against the Emperors for three centuries together, however cruel the persecutions were. ‡ The Christians were the only people who did not seek to get rid of a Nero, a Domitian, a Commodus, a Caracalla, and of so many other tyrants. These people, driven to extremity by so many acts of violence, and unheard-of cruelties, never thought of taking up arms in their own defence, though their numbers were greater than any of the nations, who made war with the Romans. What is more, so many Christian soldiers, who filled the Roman armies, never made use of the arms

* Euf. Martyr. Palæst. c. 8.

† Tert. Apol. c. 42.

‡ Tert. Apol. c. 35. 36. 37.

they

they had in their hands, but according to the orders of their Commanders; and entire Legions were seen, like that of St Mauricius, to suffer themselves to be massacred without any resistance, rather than be wanting in what they owed either to God or Cæsar.*

Scarce could they prevail on themselves to open their mouths in their own defence, and to publish some answers to the horrid calumnies with which they were loaded.† For near a whole century, they contented themselves with suffering, after the example of their divine master,‡ who made no answer and delivered himself up, without resistance, to him who judged him unjustly. Their good deeds were all their justification. They did not begin to write any apologies till the time of the Emperor Adrian;|| and these were couched in the most respectful terms, though strong and weighty, that it might be easily seen that they proceeded from no other motive, but from that of a sincere zeal for truth.

This invincible patience forced, at last, all the powers to submit to the Gospel. The persecutions still continued, even when the number of Christians were prodigious. "We are only of yesterday, and we fill all your cities, your towns, your houses, your colonies, your fields, your tribes, your palace, your senate, your forums."§ In

* Aët. S. Maur. ex S. Eucher. † Orig. in Cels. init.

‡ 1 Pet. II 23. || V. Euf. 4. hist. c. 3. & 25.

§ Tert. Apol.

fact, there were Christians of every rank and condition, and in the highest departments. We see, in the Martrologe, Senators, Prefects, Proconsuls, Tribunes, Questors, and even Consuls. We find Christians among the Domestic and Principal Officers of the Emperors, of Nero, of Trajan, of Alexander, of Decius, of Valerian, and of Dioclesian.*

The people, touched with the virtues and miracles of the Christians, began to do them justice, and to publish aloud that their God was great, and that they were innocent. It sometimes happened, while the Martyrs were tormented, that the populace assembled at this sight, took their part in spite of them, and drove the Magistrate from his tribunal with stones. Often those who kept the Registers, the Jailors, the Guards, the Soldiers, the Executioners, became converts, cried out, all of a sudden, that they were Christians; and, in consequence, were the companions of their sufferings.† Even Comedians have been seen to be converted on the stage, where they were acting the sacred Mysteries, and became illustrious Martyrs.‡ This was the cause of the extreme cruelty of the last persecution. The persecutors saw that all the

* Martyrol. 18. Apr. 10. & 19. Maii. 19. Aug. 13. Sep. 8. Octob. 12 & 20. Mart. 17 & 19. Maii. 19. Jun. 20. Jul. 2. Sept. 7. Oct. 18. Euf. 6. hist. c. 28.

† Act. S. Bonif. An. 305. Martyrol. Jan. 1. Feb. 16. 17. 27. Mart. 9. 27. 30. Maii. 31. Jun. 30. Jul. 7. Aug. 21. Sept. 20. 25. Oct. 10. 19. Nov. 26. Dec. 3.

‡ Act. S. Genef.

world was become Christian ; and that their cruelty only served to extend and strengthen Religion ; so that every thing was now become favourable to it, when Constantine declared himself its protector.



O 3

§ XXXIV.

§ XXXIV. PART III.

CHRISTIAN PRINCES.

I Am now come to the third part of this Treatise, where I am to represent the manners of the Christians from the time the Church enjoyed peace and liberty. They had, for the space of three hundred years, sighed after this peace, as a state in which the Faithful might serve God without any obstacle: but experience too plainly shews that a state of persecution was of more advantage to them. The same manners however, which I have been describing, still continued for a long time: I have, therefore, only here to take notice of the difference in many respects, which the free exercise of Religion introduced at first.

In the first place, it was a new miracle to see Christian Princes. In the preceding ages no one could believe that the great ones would ever submit to the severity of the discipline of the Church; or conceive how humility and mortification could subsist with absolute power and immense riches. This, undoubtedly, made Tertullian say, that the Cæsars would have been already converted, could they have been Cæsars and Christians at the same time; * and Origen used much the same language. † God, moreover, performed this miracle in the sight of the Uni-

* Apol. c. 21.

† In Cels. l. 8.

verse; and it is the most considerable change that happened in the times I am speaking of, since it was the cause of the liberty of the Church.

Immediately on the conversion of Constantine, the name of JESUS-CHRIST and his Cross were seen on Ensigns of the Roman troops; and that which had hitherto been the instrument of the most infamous punishment, became an ornament to crowns. The Emperor had an Oratory in his palace, where he shut himself up alone every day to read the holy scripture, and to say appointed prayers at certain hours, particularly on Sunday, the rest of which day he made even the heathens themselves observe. * In the army he ordered a tent to be carried in form of a Church, to sing the divine offices therein, and to administer the sacraments to the Faithful. Some Priests and Deacons followed, and even some Bishops, whom the Emperor considered as the Guard of his soul. † He made Constantinople entirely Christian. The Eve of Easter was there kept with the most magnificent illuminations; not only in the Churches, but in the streets; and throughout the whole city, torches, or rather columns of wax, were lighted, which changed that sacred night into noon-day. ‡ In the squares of this large city were seen fountains adorned with the images of the good Shepherd, or of Daniel

* Euf. 2. Vit. c. 12. 14, & 4. c. 17. 21. † Sozom.
 ‡ Euf. Vit. 3. c. 48. & 4. c. 22.

in the den of lions. There was not any Idol, or any Temples of the false Gods in it. Who is a stranger to the magnificence with which Constantine treated the Fathers of the Council of Nicæa, and the honours he shewed them? He furnished them with carriages to bring them from the most distant parts of that great Empire; he bore their expences while the council lasted, and sent them home loaded with presents. He burnt the memorials which had been presented against any of the Bishops: * he kissed the scars of the Confessors, who still bore the marks of the persecutions. He entered, without guards, and with a modest and respectful air, where the council was sitting, and sat not down himself, until the Bishops had made him a sign to do so. He lastly made a grand entertainment for them in his palace, and sat down to table with them. † Then was JESUS-CHRIST seen to reign in a striking manner even over Kings themselves.

The Great Theodosius did still more honour to Religion, by the practice of Christian virtues. He prayed much, he had recourse to God in his greatest concerns, and attributed to him the good success of his arms. He suffered himself to be carried by a violent fit of anger against the inhabitants of Thessalonica: the sin was great; but the repentance was proportionate; and he esteemed no Bishop equally with St Ambrose,

* Euf. Vit. 3. c. 6. 7. &c.

† Soc. I. hist. c. 5 & 8.

because

because he found none who flattered him less.* The Empress, his spouse, is likewise commended for her piety and charity towards the poor. This same spirit continued in their family; but it shone forth principally in St Pulcheria, their grand-daughter, who consecrated herself to God, at the age of fifteen, together with her two sisters, by a vow of Virginity; and who, without quitting the palace, there led a life so retired, so well employed, so pious, that the contemporary writers compare this palace to a Monastery, that is to say, to what they knew most holy.

It was in this school of virtue, that she caused the young Emperor Theodosius, her brother, to be brought up.† He practised the same exercises, he rose early in the morning to sing the praises of God with his sisters, he prayed much, he frequented the Churches, and made great presents to them. He often fasted, but chiefly on Wednesdays and Fridays. He had a library of Ecclesiastical books, he knew the holy Scripture by heart, and conversed thereon with the Bishops, as if he had been of their profession. He shewed them great respect, and honoured all virtuous Christians. He ordered the relics of many of the Saints to be translated with great pomp, and founded several hospitals and monasteries.

* Theod. hist. Eccles. 5. c. 17.
Sozom. 9. c. 1. Theod. 4. c. 36.

† See 7. c. 22.

His sister not only trained him up in the practice of Religion, but also made him learn, with great care, whatever it was proper for him to know, as Emperor. Some excellent masters taught him the sciences, others taught him to ride and fence. He was inured to bear heat and cold, hunger and thirst. His sister herself instructed him in all the rules of decorum, with regard to his dress, his gesture, and gait. She taught him to stifle bursts of laughter, to render himself amiable or terrible, as circumstances required, and to hear people with patience. He got the mastery over his passionate temper; he was mild, humane, and compassionate.

Such was the younger Theodosius, born in the purple, in the East, and in a very corrupted age. The Emperor Marcianus, who succeeded him, after great services and long experience, shewed the same piety and zeal for Religion, with still greater firmness and more capacity: And we need no other proof of his virtue, than the choice St Pulcheria made of him, who married him, in order to associate him with her on the throne, but with this charge, that she was still to remain a Virgin.

§ XXXV.—FORM of the CHURCHES.

AS soon as Constantine had put an end to the persecution, every where were seen, according to the report of Eusebius, dedications of Churches, and assemblies of Bishops. The Christians joined together every where: they became more assiduous in singing of psalms, and the celebration of the Mysteries: All the ceremonies of Religion were observed with more solemnity. This therefore is the place to speak of the exterior worship. Let us begin with the description of the Churches, according to what remains of them, both in books and the most ancient buildings. But let us first observe that even then it was not allowed to meet in any Church to perform the divine service, before it had been dedicated with the usual ceremonies, nor to celebrate the Mysteries any where, except in the Church, and with consecrated vessels. Both the one and the other plainly appear from the calumnies raised against St Athanasius.*

The Church was separated, as much as might be, from all profane buildings; at a distance from noise, and surrounded on every side with courts, gardens, or buildings dependent on the Church itself, all which were shut up within an inclosure of walls. First there was a gate or entry

* Athan. ap. 1. p. 684.—Apol. 2. p. 781, &c.
which

which led into a Peristyle, that is to say, a square Court, surrounded with covered galleries, supported by columns, like the cloisters of Monasteries. The poor staid under these galleries, and were allowed to beg at the Church-door. In the middle of the Court were one or more fountains to wash the hands and face before prayer:* the holy-water-pots have now taken their place. At the farther end was a double Porch, which led into the Saloon or Basilic, which was the body of the Church. I say this Porch was double, because one was without the Church and the other within, which the Greeks called *Narthex*. Near the Basilic, on the out-side, were at least two buildings. The Baptistery at the entrance; at the farther end the Sacristy or Treasury, called likewise *Secretarium* or *Diaconicum*; and sometimes this was double. Often all along the sides of the Church were chambers or cells† for the conveniency of such, who wished to meditate or pray in private: We would call them Chapels.

The Basilic was divided into three parts according to its breadth, by two rows of pillars, which supported Galleries on each side, and the middle of which was the Nave, as we see in all the old Churches. At the end, eastward, was the Altar, behind which was the Presbytery or Sanctuary; that is to say, what was afterwards called the Bolster

* Paulin. Ep. 12. & Natal 10.—S. Greg. 4. Dial. c. 14.

† Cellæ. Exhedræ.

of the Church. Its plan was a semicircle; which inclosed the Altar behind: It was vaulted above, in form of a Niche, which covered it.* In Latin it was called *Concha*, that is to say, a shell; and the Arcade, which made the opening of it, was called in Greek the *Abstr.* The Christians, perhaps at first, wanted to imitate the sitting of the Sanhedrim of the Jews, where the Judges were seated in a semicircle, the President being in the middle:† The Bishop held the same place in the Presbytery. He was in the middle, having the Priests on each side of him; and his seat was called *Thronos* in Greek, and was more elevated than the other seats. All the seats together were called in Greek *Synthronos*,‡ in Latin *Conseffus*. Sometimes it was called tribunal, in Greek *Bema*, because it resembled the tribunals of the secular Judges in the Basilics.|| The Bishop was, as it were, the Magistrate, the Priests his Counsellors. This Tribunal was raised, and the Bishop came down from it to approach the Altar:§ The Altar was inclosed before by an open balustrade; beyond which was another separate place in the Nave, for the Chanters or Singers, which, on this account, was afterwards called the Choir, in Greek *Choros*, or Chancel, from the Latin word *Cancelli*. The Chanters

* V. Cang. Descript. S. Sophiae. † Cod. Thalm.
 sanhedr. c. 4. § 3. ‡ Greg. Naz. carm. de Anast.
 || Prud. Perist. II. v. 215. de S. Hippol. § Ordo
 Rom.

were only simple Clerics appointed to that function. At the entrance of the Choir was the *Ambo*, that is, a raised tribune, with steps up to it on both sides, serving to read the public Lessons, and since called the Pulpit, Desk, or Lobby. If there was but one *Ambo*, it was in the middle; but sometimes there were two, not to hide the Altar. On the right-hand of the Bishop, and on the left-hand of the people, was the Pulpit for the Gospel; and on the other side that for the Epistle. Sometimes there was a third for the Prophecies.

The Altar was a table of Marble or Porphyry; sometimes of massy silver, or even of gold, enriched with precious stones: For no matter was thought too costly to bear the Holy of Holies: And the ceremonies still used in the consecration of Altars, sufficiently express this respect. They were sometimes, however, only of wood; and was supported on four feet or columns, rich in proportion; and it was placed, as far as could be done, over the tomb of some Martyr: For it was the custom to assemble at their tombs, or build Churches there: Or, at least, their bodies were translated to the places where the buildings were erected. And hence, at last, it became a rule to consecrate no Altar without placing some relics under it. These sepulchres of the Martyrs were what they called their *Memories* or *Confessions*. They were under-ground, and the way down to them was before the Altar. This remained uncovered,

ed, except during the time of the sacrifice, or only covered with a carpet, and nothing was placed immediately on it.* It was afterwards surrounded by four pillars at the four corners, supporting a kind of Tabernacle which covered the whole Altar, and was called *Ciborium* on account of its shape, which was that of a cup reversed: For the Ancients had cups which were called *Ciboria*, from the name of a certain fruit that came from Egypt.

§ XXXVI.—*Ornaments of the Churches.*

ALL this was most magnificently adorned. The *Ciborium* and the Pillars which supported it, were often all of silver; and some there were that weighed three thousand Marks. Between these pillars hung curtains of costly stuffs, to inclose the Altar on the four sides.† The *Ciborium* was decorated with images, and other pieces of gold or silver, as, for instance, a cross to terminate it at the top.‡ Doves also of gold or silver, to represent the Holy Ghost, were hung over the Altar;|| and sometimes the Eucharist, which was reserved for the sick, was shut up in them, and sometimes it was kept in simple boxes, like our *Ciboriums* or *Pyxes*.§ Sometimes the whole *Abdis* was co-

* Baron. in Martyr. 6 Julii.
in Leon III. &c.
Constant. 530. Act. v.
Ord. Rom. c. 20.

† Id. in Steph. iv.

‡ Anast. in Silvest.

§ Conc.

§ V. Mabill. Comment. in

vered with silver, or, at least it was lined with marble, as well as the Concha. The Pillars, which supported the Basilic, were of marble, with Chapiters of brass gilt. The pavement was marble, and sometimes the whole Basilic was incrustated with it in the inside.

Mosaic, which is a sort of inlaid work, made of little pieces of glass, stained of different colours, was likewise employed, especially in the following ages.* All sorts of figures are made of them, which never lose their colour. Not but that the Churches had other paintings in them besides; the walls were generally adorned with some. There were seen diverse histories of the Old Testament, especially such as were figures of the New; such as the Ark of Noah, the sacrifice of Isaac, the passage of the Red Sea, Daniel amongst the lions.† In several places was seen the figure of our Saviour, and some of his miracles; such as the multiplication of the loaves, and the resurrection of Lazarus. Eusebius assures us, that Constantine ordered the good Pastor, and Daniel among the lions, to be set up in the Squares of Constantinople: And in another place he tells us, that the pictures of St Peter, and of St Paul, and of JESUS-CHRIST himself, painted in colours, had been kept from the earliest ages, as it was an inviolable custom among the ancients thus to honour their benefac-

* Opus Musivum. Felib Princip. de Archit.

† Roma Sqter. l. 4. c. 67, &c.

tors.* St Augustine however acknowledges that, in his time, they had no true portraits of them, but only images made from fancy, such as we have now.† Lastly, in each Church was represented the history of the Martyr whose relics were deposited there. Prudentius‡ gives us two fine examples of this in the history of St Cassian and of St Hippolytus, and Asterius in that of St Euphemia. These paintings were made chiefly in favour of the ignorant, to whom they served as books, as Pope Greg. H. says, writing to the Emperor Leo, author of the Iconoclasts: “The men and the women holding in their arms the new baptized infants, point out the histories to them with the finger, as they do also to the young people, or to the Gentile strangers. It is thus they edify them, and raise their minds and hearts to God.”|| The Church-doors were adorned with ivory, silver, or gold, and furnished with curtains. At the principal doors were placed some Relics, from whence came the great respect the Faithful shewed them, at entering in at the doors.§

The *Diaconicum*, or the *Sacristy*, was a considerable building, joining to the Church. In it was the Treasury for the sacred Vessels; none therefore entered that place, but such ministers as had a right to touch those vessels. The books also, the sacerdotal Vestments,

* 3 Vit. Const. c. 49. & 8 hist. c. 18. † Lib. 8. Trin. c. 4. n. 7. ‡ Prud. Peristeph. 9, & 11. || Greg. II. Ep. 1. in Conc. Nic. 11. § Hier. ad Demetr.—Paul. Nat. 3 & 6.—Leo III.—Baron. ad Martyrol. 18. Nov. Conc. Agath. c. 66.

other rich moveables, the offering of the Faithful, and sometimes the Eucharist in a box, shut up in an ivory tower, were kept there. The *Secretarium* was a large closet, or rather a saloon, in which the Bishop assembled with his Clergy, to treat in private on Ecclesiastical affairs,* or to prepare himself for the Sacrifice, like St Martin, who was accustomed to spend three hours there in prayer before the Mass.† Some were spacious enough to hold Councils in them.‡

They had a great number of Chalices and Patines, which, in the first ages, were frequently only of glass; but often also of silver or gold, even in the time of the persecutions.¶ In Latin the word *Calix* signifies a common drinking-cup, and *Patina* a plate to serve up meat upon. The Chalices of the Churches were mostly of the weight of three Marks:§ the Patens were large basons or dishes, to the weight of forty-five, and commonly of thirty Marks.¶ They used wax-tapers even at that time, and great numbers of them were lighted even at noon-day, together with a great number of lamps.** This practice had for a long time been a mark of respect and joy. Mention is made thereof in the books of the Machabees.†† Fire was carried before the Roman Magistrates; and the *Notitia Imperii* represents, among other

* Paulin. Ep. 12. † Sever. de Vit. S. Mart.

‡ Conc. Carthag. ¶ V. Perron. Euch. l. 3. c. 2.

§ A Mark of Silver is 1l. 6s. 3d. ¶ Lib. Pont. in Mar. & alibi passim. Lib. 3. & Lib. 20. *** V. Hier. in Vigil. c. 3.—Prud. de S. Laurent. †† 2 Mac. iv. 22.

marks

marks of the great Officers, a table with a book on it, placed upon a cushion, sometimes uncovered, at other times covered with a large Veil, accompanied with two Candlesticks with lighted tapers in them; which has a great resemblance to our Altars. We find golden Candlesticks given to the Churches in the earliest times, to the weight of thirty-seven Marks each, and of silver to the weight of forty-five each. We find even perfumed tapers in use, and that in the provinces, as at the Baptism of Clovis.

The *Baptistery* was usually built in a round form, having a place sunk in the middle, into which they went down by some steps into the water; for it was properly a bath.* They afterwards contented themselves with a large vessel of marble or porphyry, like a bathing-tub: And at last reduced it to a vase, such as the Fonts are at present. The Baptistery was adorned with paintings suitable to this sacrament, and furnished with several vessels of gold and silver to keep the holy oils, and to pour the water. These vessels were often in the shape of lambs or stags,† to represent the LAMB, in whose blood we are washed, and to express the longings of devout souls, after God, as the thirsty hart pants after a fountain of water,‡ according to the expression of the psalm.¶ There was seen the image of St John the

* Anaft. in Sylvest. Greg. Turon, lib. i.

Ep. 12.

xi. 1.

† Lib. Pont. in Innocent. et al.

‡ Paul.

¶ Pl

Baptist, and a Dove of gold or silver suspended over the sacred bath; the better to represent the whole history of the baptism of JESUS-CHRIST, and the virtue of the holy Ghost, who descends on the baptismal water. Some even called the Fonts the Jordan.*

Such nearly were the ancient Churches, and the buildings adjoining to them, without speaking of the Bishop's house, and lodgings for the Clergy; (to which succeeded, in the following ages, the Cloisters of the Prebends) and, to say nothing of the hospitals of different sorts, which commonly were near the principal Church.

§ XXXVII—*Difference between Churches and Temples.*

THE Heathens however reproached the Christians with having neither Temples nor Altars, nor any known images, nor sacrifices, nor festivals; and the Christians only defended themselves by saying, that neither material Temples, nor Altars, nor bloody sacrifices, were worthy of the majesty of God.† That God had no other images but his Son, and rational souls, who, by imitating this Son, made themselves like unto the Father. That they offered him al-

* Concil. Constant. Ecl.

† Orig. in Cels. l. 8.—Minut.

ways and in all places, sacrifices of praise on the altars of their hearts, kindled with the fire of charity. In a word, that true Christians always kept a festival, by their detachment from all temporal things, the peace of a good conscience, and the joy arising from the hopes of heaven. It was thus they defended themselves against the reproaches of the Heathens. They never said, "We have Temples and Altars as well as you, though of a different form."

In reality, these words, *Temple* and *Altar*, conveyed different ideas to the minds of the Heathens from what they do to us. An Altar was a hearth of stone raised in some Square, before a Temple or an Idol, and always in the open air. It was destined to burn the flesh of the victims, and to pour thereon wine, milk, honey, and other kinds of libations. A Temple was a building of a certain form, either round or oblong, where certain proportions were observed, and certain ornaments employed, according to the different Divinities worshipped therein, as may be seen in Vitruvius. They were, in general, small, without windows, and had little light: And, indeed, there was nothing within side of them, but the Idols and the presents made to them. The people never entered them; but staid without, around the Altar.

Our Churches were much liker to public schools, or to those halls destined to treat of business, which the ancients called *Basilica*, and

and of which Vitruvius gives us the description.* In our Churches was seen an elevated Tribunal, together with the Chair of him who presided over the assembly, a Desk for the Reader, benches for the Hearers, books, cupboards, lamps, and Chandeliers: A Table, the use of which was not well known, only it was known there was some sort of a repast which the Christians took together. And, indeed, the Christians named the places where they met, either Churches, Basilics, Oratories, Martyrdoms, Titles, Domes, or the house of God, or of the Lord.† They seldom made use of the word *Temple*, and never, that I know of, of *Delubrum* or *Fanum*. The particular names of the Churches were often taken from those of the founders, as at Rome the title of the Pastor, the Basilic of Liberius or Sixtus, which is now St Mary Major; or from the ancient name of the house, as the Basilic of the Lateran. In success of time, even the Temples of the Heathens were made use of, when they were found fit and convenient for the practices of religion. Thus at Rome, the Pantheon, the Minerva, the Fortuna Virilis, and some others, have been converted into Churches.

The Churches were not only large and handsome, but they were guarded with the greatest care, and kept extremely neat. St Jerome commends the Priest Nepotian for

* Vitr. l. 5. Baron. ad Martyr. 5 Aug. Dei, Dominicum, Kyriace.

† Domus

the care he took that the altar of his Church was clean, the walls without smoke, the pavement rubbed, the sacristy neat, the vessels bright, and that the Door-keeper was constantly at the door. All this was the employment of the lower officers, whatever name they went by; as Porters, Mansionaries, Residentaries, Chamberlains, Sacrificans:* And the number of these officers was large in the great Churches. We see still in the formulary of the Ordination of a Door-keeper or Porter, what his duty was. They gave the signal for prayer at the stated hours;† and consequently it was their place to ring the bells, when the use of them was introduced, that is to say, about the seventh century. It was their business to open the Church-doors at these hours, and to stand at them, that they might not suffer any unbelievers, or persons excommunicated to come in: they were always to keep the keys, and to take care that nothing was lost. We see in the Dialogues of St Gregory, that the Mansionaries had care of the lamps.‡ It was these officers who adorned the Church on solemn feasts, either with tapestry or silk, or other costly stuffs, or green branches or flowers:§ In a word, they did every thing that was necessary to keep the holy place in such a condition, as might inspire respect and piety. All these functions appeared so great, that laymen were not permitted to

* Cubicularii. Æditui. † Pont. Rom. ‡ Dial.
I. c. 5. & 3. c. 24. § Paul. Nat. 3. & 6.

do them; and they rather chose to institute new orders of the Clergy, on purpose to ease the Deacons of these employments.

§ XXXVIII.—*What strikes the Senses is of Service to Religion.*

AND indeed, though the Christian Religion be totally interior and spiritual, Christians are men, who feel, as well as others, the impression of the senses and the imagination. It even may be said, that the far greatest part of men, only act and live according to these impressions: for how small is the number of those, who apply their minds to such operations, as are purely intellectual? And even these, how often are they diverted from them? Piety, therefore, must be aided by objects that strike the senses. Were we Angels, we might pray equally in every place, in the midst of a throng market, or of a street that is a thoroughfare, in a guard-house, in an ale-house full of noise and debauchery, in the most stinking common-sewer. Why do we shun all these places, where we find ourselves distracted and uneasy, only to help the weakness of our senses and imagination? It is not God who stands in need of Temples and Oratories, it is us. He is equally present every where, and ever ready to hear us: but we are not always in a condition to speak to him. It would, therefore, answer no purpose to consecrate some particular

particular places to his service, unless they were made fit to inspire us with sentiments of piety.

Let us suppose, for instance, what we but too often see, through the negligence of these latter ages : let us suppose, I say, a Church so badly situated, that you hear therein all the noise of a large street or a market place ; or so dirty that you know not where to place yourself, or to kneel down : suppose it, moreover, to be so crowded with people, that those who wish to pray, are continually pushed and trampled on by such as pass by, and continually interrupted by children and beggars of all sorts. Add to this, that the eyes are struck only with disagreeable objects, besmoked walls, dusty pictures, and placed in a bad light ; ill-shaped, or mutilated statues, or other bad ornaments. Let us add, lastly, to sum up whatever may be disagreeable to our senses, bad incense, and discordant voices, singing horrid music. It would be easier to pray, with attention, in an open field, or an empty house, than in such a Church. If, on the other hand, you find a Church well built, clean and quiet, where the people are properly ranged in their places ; where a well-regulated Clergy perform the service with great modesty ; you would be inclined to hear this service with attention, and to pray with your heart, at the same time that you pray with your tongue.*

* I Cor. iv. 15.

The holy Bishops of the first ages had observed all this. These Saints were Greeks and Romans, often great Philosophers, and good Judges of decorum. They knew that the order, greatness, and neatness of exterior objects naturally excited noble, pure, and well-regulated ideas; and that the affections follow the thoughts: but that the soul, with difficulty, applies itself to what is good, while the body suffers, and the imagination is hurt.* They thought Piety of sufficient importance, to require to be aided by every means. They therefore would have the holy sacrifice celebrated with all the majesty possible, and that the people should assist thereat with every conveniency; that they should love the places of prayer, and have a profound respect for them. At the same time, they knew how to banish from thence worldly pride, effeminate luxury, whatever might soften the heart, and dangerously strike the senses:—It was not their design to flatter them, but to aid them.—All this will be better understood, when I describe the Liturgy at length.

§ XXXIX.—*Order of the Liturgy.*

THE sacrifice was offered every Sunday, and besides, twice a week, viz. on Wednesdays and Fridays; as also on the feasts of the martyrs, on fasting-days, or oftener, according to the custom of each

* Id. Plat. 3. de Rep.

Church. * Votive Masses were likewise said, out of private or public devotion. Sometimes several Masses were said on a day, as when the office of some Saint fell on the same day, on which there was some other festival; or when there was a funeral service to be performed. The Bishop, or the same Priest celebrated them all, as we still do the three Masses of Christmas. Pope Leo III. is said to have celebrated thus seven Masses, or even nine. † On Sundays and holidays Mass was said after Terce; and on fasting-days later, according as the fast was to be broken after None, or after Vespers. The hour being come, the people assembled in the principal Church, to go from thence with the Bishop and all the Clergy to the place, where the station was appointed: ‡ for the Bishop thus visited the Churches one after another; and from this way of going in a body and in order, came the Processions.

While the people were going in, and each one taking his place, the Choir sung a psalm with its anthem, to which the name of *Introit* has remained. The Deacons, and those who were appointed to assist them, that is, the Subdeacons, and the Door-keepers, marked out to each one his place, as he came in, in order to avoid confusion. § When they had taken their places; they prayed for some time in silence. The Bishop then sa-

* S. Epiph. hær. Chryf. in Joan. hom. 25. init.

† Bona. S. liturg. c. 18. ‡ V. Cod. Sacram.

§ V. Ord. Rom.

luted the people, and concluded the prayers, said in silence, by pronouncing aloud that which is called the *Collect*, as collecting together the vows and prayers of all the Faithful.

The Bishop then seated himself on his throne, which being at the bottom of the Basilic, was the point of view, where the looks of the whole assembly terminated. Thus each Pastor was a visible image of God; and, as St Paul expresses it, he was the model of his flock, as JESUS-CHRIST was of his. * The Priests were round about him, seated on the right and left, on each side, in the semicircle of the Absis; and the Deacons stood: so that the Church resembled, pretty much, the image of heaven, which St John gives us in the Apocalypse. †

The Bishop on his throne, with a book in his hand, as the Fathers are painted, was in place of that human figure, under which God appeared. The Priests were that august senate represented by the four and twenty Elders. ‡ The Bishop, says St Ignatius, presides in the place of God; the Priests in the place of the senate of the Apostles; the Deacons and the other Ministers were the Angels ever ready to attend and execute the orders of God. || Before the Bishop's throne were seven Candlesticks and the altar, whereon were offered the perfumes, the symbol of prayer; § and whereon after-

* Cor. xi. 1. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

† Apoc. iv.

‡ V. Greg. Naz. carm. 9. p. 98.
Ord. Rom.

|| Ign. ad Magnes.

§ Apoc. viii. 3.

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wards was to be offered the Lamb without spot, though under a borrowed form. Underneath this same altar were the bodies of the Martyrs, as under that which St John saw, were their souls, who were told to rest yet for a little while.* Lastly the multitude of the Faithful, who filled the rest of the Basilic, represented, not amiss, the innumerable multitude of the Blessed, † who, clothed in white garments, and with palms in their hands, sung, with a loud voice, the praises of God. ‡ Such was the appearance of the Ecclesiastical Assemblies.

When every one had taken his place, the Reader went up to the Ambo or Desk, and read a Lesson, out of the Old Testament, then one out of the New; that is to say, out of the Acts, or the Epistles, of the Apostles: for the reading of the Gospel was always reserved for a Priest or a Deacon. To render these Lessons more pleasing, and to give the people time to meditate on them, and the Readers some respite, they were intermixed with psalms and anthems, and the singing of *Alleluia*, which, even at that time, preceded the Gospel. All these Lessons were in the Vulgar tongue, that is to say, in the tongue which the better sort of people spoke in each country. For although the Punic tongue was still used by the common people in Africa, in St Augustine's time, we do not see that the Church made use of it. But, in the Thebais, the Lessons must have been read in the Eryp-

* Apoc. v.

† Ibid. vi. 9.

‡ Ibid. viii. 9.

tian tongue, as St Anthony, who understood no other, was converted by hearing the Gospel read in the Church *. In the Upper Syria the greatest part of the Bishops did not understand Greek, and knew only the Syriac, as appears from the Councils, in which they stood in need of interpreters. †

At least, if the Assemblies consisted of mixed nations, there were interpreters to explain the Lessons. St Procopius, the martyr, performed this office at Scythopolis in Palestine, together with those of Reader and Exorcist: what he read in Greek, he explained in Syriac, which was the common language of the country. ‡ Sometimes the Lessons were read in two languages, as in the Church of Rome, where, after they had been read in Latin, they were read also in Greek, on account of the number of Orientals, who were there. || Most of the Oriental Churches still do the same; and after having read the Gospel in Syriac, for example, or in Coptic, which are the ancient languages in those parts, it is again read in Arabic, which is the vulgar tongue.

In the Monastery of St Theodosius, in Palestine, there were three Churches, in which the service was performed in different languages. They even there began the Mass, but they all met together in the Church of the Greeks, after the Gospel was read. §

* Vit. S. Anton. c. i. † Conc. Ephes. Conc. Chalced. Act. 10. init. ‡ Euf. de Mart. Palæst. c. 1.

|| Ord. Rom. x. n. 17. Cod. sacram. § Vit. S. Theod. ap. Boll. II. Jan. c. 9.

§ XL.—S E R M O N.

THE reading was followed by the *Sermon*. The Bishop explained the Gospel, or some other part of the scripture; of which he sometimes took a whole book to explain in order; or he chose some subject of the greatest importance. We have instances of these explications, in order, in most of the homilies of St John Chrysostome, and in St Augustine's Treatises on St John. We see chosen subjects in St Ambrose, which first treat of the work of the six days or the Creation, in imitation of St Basile: then of the history of Noah, of Abraham, and of the other most illustrious Saints of the Old Testament; which still comes to the order of the holy scriptures. And, by the sermons of the Fathers, we see that the order of the Lessons out of the scripture, was nearly the same it is at present, during the course of the Ecclesiastical year. Most of these Treatises and Commentaries of the Fathers were nothing but sermons, which they afterwards put in order; or which were written under them by that art of short-hand, of which I have spoken before.

These holy Preachers were not idle praters like the Sophists, who disputed in the profane schools, through a wicked emulation of contradicting one another, and of refining on one another; or who wrote in their studies, to display their learning and wit.

They

They were Pastors, whose time was taken up with an infinite multiplicity of works of charity, amongst others of reconciling differences; who failed not to preach very often, in order to discharge that duty, which they looked upon as the most essential of their ministry: For, in the first ages, all the Bishops preached, and scarce any preached besides themselves.* They began in the East to make some Priests of extraordinary talents preach, such as Origen, and even Laics.† We see in the West, St Felix preach at Nola, while he was only a Priest, in the times of the persecutions.‡ But these instances were so rare, that many have considered St John Chrysostome, and St Augustine, as the first Priests, with whom their Bishops intrusted this ministry. St Jerome, however, blames the custom of some Churches, where the Priest never spoke in the presence of the Bishop.

Our modern Preachers find most of the sermons of the Fathers very different from the idea of preaching, which they have formed to themselves. The sermons of the Fathers are plain, without any shew of art, without any divisions, without any subtle reasoning, without any curious erudition; some of them without any attempt to move the passions, most of them very short. True it is, these holy Bishops did not aim at being Orators, or

* V. Aug. de Ap. Monach. c. 29. & Ep. ad Diof. 5. Synes. Ep. 55. † Euf. hist. 6. c. 20 c. S. Paulin. Nat. 5. ‡ Ad Nepot.

making harangues. What they aimed at, was to speak in a familiar manner, as Fathers speak to their children, and Masters to their scholars. It was for this reason, that their discourses were called *Homiliae* in Greek, and in Latin *Sermones*, that is to say, familiar Discourses. They sought to instruct when they explained the scriptures, not by shewing their critical knowledge, and their curious researches, like the Grammarians, who explained Homer or Virgil in the schools; but by the tradition of the Fathers, for the confirmation of the Faith, and the correction of morals. They sought to move, not so much by the vehemence of figures, and the efforts of declamation, as by the grandeur of the truths they preached, by the authority of their charge, their own personal sanctity, and their charity. They often spoke extempore, as appears from St Augustine, who sometimes treats on a different subject from that which he had proposed at first. But they never wanted Copiers to take down their sermons in short-hand.*

They proportioned their style to the capacity of their hearers. The sermons of St Augustine are the plainest of all his works. The style is more concise and easier than his letters; because he preached in a little town consisting of sea-faring people, labourers, and shop-keepers. But we see in his Treatises of Controversy, particularly in his books against Julian, that he had not forgot his

* Greg. Naz. Orat. 32.

Rhetoric, after having taught it for so long a time. On the contrary, St Cyprian, St Ambrose, St Leo, who preached in great cities, speak in a more pompous manner, and use more ornaments: but their styles are different, according to their particular genius, and the taste of their different ages. For we must not attribute to the subjects of piety, the defects with which the modern humanists reproach the Fathers, as that of not speaking Latin with sufficient purity; employing some weak proofs; and some flimsy ornaments; making use of some, too far-fetched, allegories; puns and rhymes. All these were the faults of their ages—Had they lived in the time of Cicero and Terence, they would have spoken like them.

The Greek Fathers differ less from the ancient Authors. The language had not changed so much in the East, and the study of literature had been better preserved. Most of the works of these Fathers are equally pleasing and solid. St Gregory Nazianzen is sublime, and his style laboured. St John Chrysostome appears to me a perfect model of a preacher. He commonly began by explaining the scripture verse by verse, as the Reader read it; confining himself always to the most literal sense, and that which contributed most to the improvement of manners. He concludes with a moral exhortation, which often has no great connection with the preceding instruction: but which has always a relation to the most pressing

pressing wants of his hearers, according to the knowledge this so prudent and vigilant a Pastor had of them. One even sees that he attacks one vice after another; and that he ceased not to combat them, until he had either exterminated them, or remarkably weakened them.

As these Saints regarded neither reputation nor other temporal interest: their only aim was the conversion of souls; and they thought they had done nothing, unless they saw some very sensible change. Thus St Augustine undertook to abolish the custom of public entertainments on the festivals of the martyrs, which degenerated into excesses of debauchery; and however inveterate this custom had been, he abolished it, by shewing the people the formal texts of scripture, which condemned all excess in eating and drinking; and by exhorting them, with tears, for two days together, until he had brought them over.* And, indeed, the force of Eloquence, as he himself says, does not consist in exciting acclamations, but in imposing silence, and drawing forth tears.† There was no room to fear that different doctrines would be taught in the same Church, as there was no other Preacher, nor any other Teacher but the Bishop, or a Priest whom he had made choice of, and who spoke only by his order and in his presence.

During the time of sermon, the Church

* Ep. 29.

† Aug. 4. de Doctr. Christ. c. 24.

was open to every body, even to the Heathens. Hence the Fathers observed exactly the secrecy of the mysteries, not to speak of them at all, or only in an obscure manner. Hence, also, in their sermons, there are discourses addressed directly to the Heathens, in order to draw them over to the Faith. During the Lessons and the instructions, the Hearers were seated in order; the men on one side, and the women on the other; and to be more separated, the women went up into the high Galleries, if there were any. The aged had the first places: the fathers and mothers kept the little children before them; for they were brought to Church, provided they had been baptized: the young people stood, when the places were all filled. There were Deacons constantly attentive to see this order kept; to take care that every one paid due attention, and suffered not any one to slumber, laugh, whisper, or nod, or make the least sign to one another; in a word, to see that silence and modesty were every where kept.* In Africa the people heard all the instructions standing, as St Augustine assures us; but, at the same time, he approves more of the custom of the Churches beyond sea, as he calls them, where the hearers were sitting.†

The sermon being ended, the Deacons made all those go out, who were not to assist at the sacrifice. First the hearers, and

* Const. Apost. l. 2. c. 57. Greg. Naz. Carm. 9. de Anast.

† De lat Rud. c. 1.

the unbelievers. Then the Catechumens were prayed for, and sent out. Afterwards they prayed for the Energumens, or such as were possessed, and sent them out. They did the same to the Competents, and lastly to the Penitents.* The Faithful, now remaining alone, prayed for the whole Church, for all the orders of the Clergy and of the people, for all in affliction, and for their enemies and persecutors. The Deacon, performing the part of the Crier in the profane assemblies, mentioned for whom they prayed, and the Bishop pronounced the prayer in the manner we still do on Good-Friday. In other Masses, the Prayers at the Prone or Exhortation supply the place of these prayers. Then the Bishop saluted the people again, and the Deacons said, with a loud voice: "Has any one here any thing in his heart against his neighbour? Is any one here with deceit in his heart? Embrace one another." They then gave the kiss of peace.

The practice, however, of the Roman Church, which we still observe, was not to give the kiss of peace till after the Consecration of the mysteries, immediately before the Communion. †

* Conc. Laod. c. 19. Chryf. hom. 3. in Ep. ad Eph.

† Inn. I. Ep. I. c. I.

§ XLI.—SACRED DRESSES.

AFTER all these preparations the sacrifice began. The Deacons, assisted by the Subdeacons, put the cloth upon the altar; and on another table, which we call the *Credence*, from an Italian word, which signifies a buffet, they got ready all the sacred vessels; among the rest the chalices and patins, and covered them with a veil to keep them clean.* The Bishop descended from his Throne, and came to the Altar, with his face towards the people, clothed in a bright garment, as well as the Priests and the other Ministers; for they had, even at that time, particular dresses for the public service.†

Not that these dresses were of any uncommon shape. Pope Celestine I. writing to the Bishops of Gaul, in the year 428, says: “We ought to distinguish ourselves from the people, not by our dress, but by our doctrine and manners; nor ought we to seek to impose on the eyes of the simple by the singularity of our exterior.” The Chasuble or Vestment was, in St Augustine’s time, a part of the dress worn by every body.‡ The Dalmatic was in use as early as in the time of the Emperor Valerian. The Stole was a Cloke, worn by the women as well as by the men; and we have confounded it with *Orarium*, which was a long and narrow

* Ord. Rom. l. n. 11.

† Const. Apol. 8. c. 12.

‡ Aug. 13. Civ. c. 8.

piece of linen, made use of by all who wished to keep themselves clean, in order to stop the sweat about the neck and face. Lastly, the Maniple, in Latin *Mappula*, was nothing but a napkin on the arm, to serve at the Holy Table.* The Albe itself, was not at first a dress peculiar to the Clergy; since the Emperor Aurelian made largesses of these sorts of Tunics to the Roman people, as well as of the large handkerchiefs called *Oraria*.†

But ever since the Clergy were accustomed to wear the Albe constantly, it was recommended to the Priests to have some to be worn only at the Altar, that they might be kept the cleaner.‡ It may therefore be believed, that while they constantly wore the Chasuble and the Dalmatic, they had particular ones for the Altar, of the same shape as the common ones, but made of richer stuffs and of brighter colours. Above all, the Canons enjoin Priests and Deacons not to serve at the Altar without the *Orarium*, the use of which, nevertheless, it forbids the inferior Ministers.||

They wished the Clergy to convey a great idea of their functions, even by their exterior: That the cleanness of their hands, face, and vestments, might be a sign of their purity of heart and innocence of life; that modesty,

* Trebell. in Claud. p. 208. 23 § 1. ff. de auro & Vest. legit.—V. Thomass. de Discipl. p. 1. lib. 1. c. 31, &c. P. ii. l. 1. c. 23. † Vopisc. in Aurel. p. 2. ‡ Hom. Leon. P. iv. T. 8. Conc. p. 34.—Const. Riculf. Suefs. c. 7. art. 589. T. 9. Conc. || Conc. Bracc. iv. c. 3. An. 675.—Conc. Laod. c. 12, 13.

gravity of looks, of their countenance, and of their gait, might impress respect and piety. The Bishops were so nice in this point, that St Ambrose cast out of his Clergy two young men, one for his unbecoming mien, and the other for his unseemly gait: And the event justified the judgment he had formed of both the one and the other.* St Gregory Nazianzen and St Basil, long before the Apostacy of Julian, knew his depravation of heart by his gait, the raising of his shoulders, and his immoderate laughter.† We must always bear in mind that these Fathers were Greeks and Romans, brought up in the greatest politeness, and the noblest ideas of true decorum: Or rather, that they constantly meditated on the Scripture, where it is said: *The attire of the body, and the laughter of the teeth, and the gait of the man, shew what he is.*‡

§ XLII. — SACRIFICE.

THE Bishop being come to the Altar, received from the hands of the Deacons the Offerings they had received from the people. Yet, in some Churches, the Bishop went himself to receive the offerings of the most distinguished personages, as at Rome those of the Senators and of their wives: For all Christians, great and small,

* S. Ambr. 2. Off. c. 19.

† Greg. Naz. Or. 4. P.

the Magistrates, the Princes themselves, assisted together at the service.* Nothing was laid on the Altar, but the bread and wine, which were to be the matter of the Sacrifice. The other kinds of provisions, oil and wax for the lights, money and whatever the Faithful offered for the wants of the Church, were received by the Deacons, who kept them in places destined to that use. It is true, however, that the new fruits of the earth were laid on the Altar, to be blessed after the sacrifice was over.

No other bread, but that which had been offered by the Faithful, and blessed by the Bishop, was used; and every one made with his own hands that which he offered. St Gregory Nazianzen† tells us so expressly, speaking of the Emperor Valens. It was required that all the Faithful should make their offering, at least those who were to go to communion; and the rich were blamed for desiring to communicate of what had been offered by the poor. The Bishop himself gave his offering; and there was at Rome, for this purpose, an Oblationary Sub-deacon.‡ The number of loaves was so great, that the Altar was heaped up with them, as some of the prayers express it;|| and the Corporal was a large table-cloth, which two Sub-deacons held stretched out at the two ends of the Altar. It was the care

* Ord. Rom. i. n. 13.

† Greg. Naz. Or. 20. p.

351. ‡ Ord. Rom. n. 14, 15.

|| Secreta in Nativ.

S. Joan. & in Vigil. Omnium S. S.

of the Archdeacon to cover the Altar with all these loaves,* and to range them in a proper manner: and this was called dressing the Altar.† He placed likewise thereon the Chalice of wine appointed to be consecrated. In order to be certain that it was fine and clear, it was poured into the Chalice through a silver cullender, I mean a vessel pierced full of holes like a sieve.‡

The Pastor having offered the bread and wine, offered also incense, which represents the prayers of the Faithful, as it is observed in the Apocalypse, where we see an Angel, employed in offering to God these spiritual perfumes.¶ The Altar was also fumed with incense, as well as the offerings or gifts, the Clergy and the people; as is still done. But they made use of true perfumes, Olibanum and others the most costly aromatics, that were then known: and this with so great a magnificence, that the Roman Church had lands in Syria, and other provinces in the East, destined to furnish these perfumes alone. During the Offertory a Psalm was sung, of which there is said now only one verse, which formerly was the Anthem of it.

When the Offerings began, the Church-doors were shut and carefully guarded by Deacons or Door-keepers, who staid by them, and opened them not even to the Faithful, till after the Communion.§ Other Deacons

* Ord. Rom. I. n. 12.

† Componere Altare.

‡ Ord. Rom. S. n. 4.

¶ Ap. viii. 3, 4, 5.

§ Const. Apost. l. 8. c. II.

walked softly up and down the Church, to take care that no one made the least noise, or the least sign to any other. There was one who particularly took care of the Children, whose place was near the Tribunal of the Bishop; and as to the very little ones, the Mothers were told to take them in their arms.* Thus all the people, with attention and in silence, hearkened, with the greatest respect, to the prayers of the Preface, and of the *Action*, which we call the *Canon*: For the Pastor said them quite aloud, and the people answered *Amen*, as they did to the other prayers. These prayers were much longer than they are at present, as is still seen in the Oriental Liturgies:† The Roman Church has retained only what was essential. Formerly, therein was given an abridgement of the whole history of Religion, giving thanks to God for the creation and reparation of the world after the Deluge, the calling of Abraham, the mercies he had shown the people of Israel; and, lastly, for the Incarnation of his Son, and the Redemption of Mankind.

After the Consecration, the Bishops took the Communion; then gave it to the Priests, then to the Deacons and the rest of the Clergy; afterwards to the Ascetes and Monks, to the Diaconesses, to the Virgins, and other Religious of the sex, to the Children, and lastly to the people.‡ To shorten this cere-

* V. Greg. Naz. Orat. 20. p. 351. Orat. 32. p. 517.
 † Const. Apost. l. 8. c. 12. ‡ Const. Apost. l. 8. c. 13.

—Can. Nicæn. 17.

mony, which was always very long, several Priests at the same time distributed the body of our Lord, and several Deacons gave the Chalice. And to avoid all confusion, the Priests and Deacons went to carry the Communion through all the ranks, as they had been to receive the offerings, so that every one stayed in his place.* The men received the body of JESUS-CHRIST on their hands; the women in linen-cloths destined to that use.† To the children were given the small particles which remained of the Eucharist; and to such as did not communicate, was given what remained of the bread which had been offered, but not consecrated: and hence came the blessed bread which is distributed at Mass. During the Communion was sung a psalm, of which there remains now only the Anthem. In the fourth century, the Communion was not so much frequented as formerly; and St Chrysostome complains that many assisted at the sacred Mysteries without communicating; and that many did not come to Communion, but on occasion of the Festivals: And he takes notice, that there were some who communicated only once or twice a year.‡

From all that I have said, it appears that the Liturgy was of a great length. And, indeed, the Christians did not think that they had any thing else to do on Sundays,

* Ord. Rom. l. p. 20. † Evag. 4. hist. c. 36.—
Niceph. 16. hist. c. 25.—Ord. Rom. ‡ Hom. 3. in
Ep. ad Eph.—Hom. 17. in Ep. ad Heb.

but to serve God. St Gregory, to shew the greatness of his infirmities, says that he could scarce stand for three hours together in the Church to go through the service. The Canon of the Mass was however the same then as it is now, and the sermons we have of his are short.

§ XLIII.—*Solemnity of the Service.*

THE whole service was accompanied with singing. Mention is made thereof in the earliest ages: But there is reason to believe, that there was still more singing when the Church enjoyed full liberty. St Augustine attributes to St Ambrose the introducing into the West the custom of singing the Psalms in imitation of the Churches of the East.* St Basil testifies, that in his time, all the people sung in the Churches, men, women, and children; and he compares their voices to the noise of the sea.† St Gregory Nazianzen compares them to thunder. St Basil also tells us, that they sung the psalms both in private houses and in the public squares; and that the singing was so agreeable, that the pleasure thereof helped to make the divine sentiments, of which the Psalms are full, to penetrate the mind,‡ which is the true end of Music. The tradition of the ancient Music still subsisted, and the kinds

* L. 9. Confess. c. 7. † Hexhem. 4. in fine.
‡ Hom. 20. p. 352.

of singing were distinguished, as the Subjects were soft or vehement, gay or sorrowful, grave or passionate.* We may therefore believe, that they chose those which agreed best with the majesty and sanctity of religion; and that they carefully avoided applying to the sacred Mysteries and the praises of God, any effeminate airs, fit only to soften the heart, or excite dangerous passions. Arius was often reproached for his *Thalia*, a Canticle which contained his doctrine, but the measure of which and the tune were taken from the infamous songs of Sotades. St Augustine, however, thought that there was something too soft in the manner of singing in the Western Church, and thought the practice of St Athanasius more safe, who caused the psalms to be repeated by a Reader, with so small an inflection of the voice, that it is rather pronouncing them, than singing them.† I leave the learned in Music to examine, if in our plain Chant, there still remain any traces of this antiquity; for our modern Church Music appears very remote from it. In this art we have no permanent models, as in Statuary and Architecture, which, now for two centuries, pains have been taken to re-establish on the models of antiquity. As to the chant of the Prayers, and the Lessons, it is easily perceived that they consist only of very few tones, to help to support the voice, and point out the distinction of the periods.

* Plato de Rep.

† X. Conf. c. 33.

I think that what I have said is sufficient to shew that the holy Bishops of these first ages, knew how prudently to employ whatever strikes the senses in an agreeable manner, to impress sentiments of religion on the souls, even of the most ignorant. Let us represent to ourselves the Faithful of Rome assembled on Easter-Eve, under the Pope St Leo, in the Basilic of the Lateran. After the blessing of the new fire, when an incredible multitude of lights had made this holy night as beautiful as a fine day, it was undoubtedly a charming sight to see that august place filled with an innumerable multitude of people, without noise or confusion, every one placed according to his age, sex, and the rank he held in the Church. A particular regard among others was paid to them that were to receive baptism that same night, and to those, who two days before had been reconciled to the Church, after having fulfilled their penance.

The eyes were struck on all sides with the Marbles and Paintings, and by the brightness of the silver, the gold, and precious stones, which were on the sacred Vessels, particularly near the holy Altar. The silence of the night was only interrupted by the reading of the Prophecies in a distinct and intelligible manner, and by the singing of the Versicles that were intermixt, to render both the one and the other more agreeable. By this variety, the soul being struck at one and the same time with so many grand
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and beautiful objects, was much better disposed to profit by these divine Lessons, being moreover prepared, for that purpose, by a continual study of them.

How great was the modesty of the Deacons, chosen and brought up by such a Prelate, and serving in his presence, or rather in the presence of God, which their piety always rendered visible to them? But how great was the majesty of the Pope himself, so venerable for his doctrine, his eloquence, his zeal, his courage, and all his other virtues? With how much respect, and with what tender piety, did he pronounce, over the sacred Fonts, those prayers which he himself had composed, and which his successors have found so holy, that they have preserved them for us during a succession of thirteen ages? I am no longer surprized, if the Christians, on these occasions, forgot the care of their bodies; and if, after fasting the whole day, they spent also all this sacred night of the Resurrection in watching and prayer, without taking any food until the next day.

§ XLIV.—*Festivals.—Pilgrimages*

WHEN this great day however was come, and the time of fasting was expired, the greatest Saints not only approved, but even ordered that the body should receive relief.

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However advantageous fasting may be for raising the mind to God, and for making the practice of prayer, for which the Festivals are appointed, more easy, it was forbidden to fast either on Sundays or Holidays, and the whole time of *Quinquagesima*. Thus they called, not as we do now, the fifty days before Easter, but the fifty days between Easter and Whitsuntide. It is true, the Monks of Egypt used great precautions to prevent this small relaxation from making them lose the fruits of their past abstinence.* But they made a distinction however between that time and others. St Pacomius, following the orders of St Palemon his Master, on Easter-Sunday dressed some herbs with oil, instead of dry bread, which he had been accustomed to eat.† A holy Priest, inspired by God, brought to St Benedict, on Easter-day, something to make a better meal of than common:‡ And to express another sort of sensible joy, St Anthony wore on Easter-day and on Whit-Sunday the Tunic made of palm-leaves, which he inherited from St Paul, the first Hermit; and St Athanasius wore the cloke St Anthony had left him. It was a custom established, even at that time among the Christians, to put on a more costly dress, and to make better cheer:§ Hence came the name of *Feast*, which is as much as to say, a Holiday's meal.

* Cass. Collat. 21. de Remis. Quinq.

S. Pacom. c. 8. † Greg. Dial. 2. c. 1.

serm. 3. de Quadrages.

‡ Vit.

§ S. Leo.

The Festivals of the Martyrs were proportionably honoured; and a great concourse of people met at their tombs. Each one celebrated with his own Bishop the Sunday, and the Festivals common to all the Churches: But people ran from all parts to the tombs of the Saints to celebrate their memories, and several Bishops often met there. A single instance may enable us to judge of the rest. St Paulinus* mentions above twenty names both of towns and provinces of Italy, the inhabitants of which came in great crouds, every year, together with their wives and children, on the Feast of St Felix, the 14th of January, notwithstanding the rigour of the season; and all this for one single Confessor in the city of Nola alone. What was it then throughout all Christendom?† What must it have been at Rome on the Feasts of St Hippolytus, of St Lawrence, of the Apostles St Peter and St Paul? People came thither, even from a great distance, and in all seasons. And such was the origin of Pilgrimages. As early as the beginning of the third age, when St Alexander was made Bishop of Jerusalem, after St Narcissus, he had come from Cappadocia to visit the holy places.‡

And, in fact, this was one of the best methods of aiding piety by the senses. The sight of the Relics of a Saint, that of his sepulchre, his prison, his chains, the instru-

* Nat. 3. † Prud. Peristeph. 2. c. 11, 12.—Mart. Jun. 29. ‡ Euf. 6. hist. c. 10.

ments of his Martyrdom, made a quite different impression from that made by barely hearing these things spoken of at a distance. Add to this, the miracles that were performed at their tombs, and which drew thither even Heathens themselves, through the pressing interest of life and health. Every body knows that one of the first effects of the liberty of the Church, was the care St Helena took to honour the holy places of Jerusalem, and of all the Holy Land.* Pilgrimages became more frequent then, than they had been before. When a luminous Cross appeared at Jerusalem, at noon-day, under the Emperor Constantius, there was an infinite number of Pilgrims from all parts of the world, who were witnesses of this miracle.† St Jerome, an eye-witness, assures us, that at all times, there was there a great concourse of all nations, even Doctors and Bishops.‡ These journies were not difficult, on account of the great extent of the Roman Empire, for the convenience of its situation on the coast of the Mediterranean, and by the high roads, which had been made on every side for the march of the armies, and of the public carriages. It was no great undertaking to go from Spain or Gaul into Egypt, Palestine, or Asia.

It was necessary to honour the martyrs at the places where they had suffered, before the custom of dividing or translating their

* Euf. 3. Vit. c. 42, &c.
Euf. Sozom. 4. hist. c. 25.

† S. Cyril. Ep. ad Con.

‡ Hier. ad Marcell.

relics. The Greeks began sooner to divide them: but at Rome, the Pope S. Gregory assures us, that unto his time, instead of relics of the Apostles, they only sent bits of linen called *Brandea*, that had touched their sepulchres, or keys of gold, in which were inclosed some of the filings of the chains of St Peter.* Each nation was jealous of preserving the relics, as pledges of the protection of the Saints, and of a particular blessing of God on the town and province; they even turned out afterwards to a temporal advantage. The concourse of Pilgrims enriched the towns; and the respect for the Saints, whose bodies reposed there, induced the Princes to grant rights of asylum, and exemptions from tributes, as Constantine did in favour of Helenopolis, in Bithynia.† It is well known how famous the franchise of St Martin of Tours was in France, and the respect the Goths testified for the Church of St Peter, when they took Rome.‡

§ XLV.—COUNCILS.

THE Councils then became free, and consequently more frequent. Not but that they had been in use from the first ages. We find several towards the end of the second

* Ep. l. 5. Ep. 66. V. Prud. Periss. passim.

† Socr. l. 1. c. 18.—Chron. pach. an 137. ‡ Greg. Turon. hist.—Orosius 7. hist. c. 39.

century, on the question about Easter. * Tertullian, immediately after, speaks of those that were held in Greece, and which were begun by some days of fasting. † St Cyprian mentions several in Africa prior to his time. He himself held several; and often says that an opportunity was to be waited for, to regulate the important affairs of the Church, such as the reconciliation of those who had fallen in the time of the persecution. But he observes, at the same time, that the persecutions prevented them from being held, because the Bishops and Priests were dispersed and concealed, as being those who they most sought after. Councils were held in the intervals of peace, and sometimes they were assembled from several Provinces, as the two of Antioch against Paul of Samosata. ‡

When the fear, therefore, of persecutions had entirely ceased, Provincial Councils were held more frequently, and more regularly, that is to say, twice a year, as it is ordered by the Council of Nicæa: || and Oecumenical ones, that is to say, of all the Churches in the world, began to be held for extraordinary affairs, and such as capitally regarded religion. The holding of Provincial Councils was judged so necessary, that Eusebius reckons the endeavour to hinder them as one of the principal effects of the perse-

* Euf. 5. hist. c. 23.

† Tert. de Jejun. c. 13.

‡ Euf. 8. hist. c. 30.

|| Can. Nicæni.

cution of Licinius. * It was the ordinary tribunal, where all Ecclesiastical matters, which were thought of too much importance to be decided by a single Bishop, were terminated. The maxim was constant, that the force of the decisions of the Church consists principally in the consent of the Pastors, which is never more express than in these holy assemblies. The Bishops themselves were judged therein, and were there ordained. They were also held on occasions of the Dedication of Churches, which were frequent in Constantine's time, to repair the destruction made of them by the persecutions. † We see a detail of the manner of holding these Councils, in the Fourth Council of Toledo. ‡

§ XLVI.—PRACTICES OF PENANCE.

IT is, moreover, to these times of liberty that we must attribute the sensible effect produced in public, by the solemn fasts of the Church, especially that of Lent. No one was dispensed with from this fast: no condition nor age passed for a lawful excuse. All business ceased: the most populous towns were as quiet as deserts. || The Faithful spent the greatest part of the day in the Churches, praying, hearing the Lessons and

* Lib. 7. hist. c. 51.

† Euf. 10. hist. c. 3.

‡ T. 5. Conc. p. 1702.

|| Hier. Ep. 7. ad Latam.

22, ad Eustoch. Chrys. in Gen. hom. 1. init.

exhortations: and hence all the service of these days, in every part, is always longer. Marriages were not celebrated. The day was not to be spent in hunting, though even the fast was observed. * The custom, also, of not deciding any law-suits in Lent, continued even in the ninth century; as also not to wear arms, or even to travel without a great necessity. †

All these practices were the consequences of penance, to which fasting-days were consecrated. And it is for the same reason that the preparation of those who were to be baptized, and the preparation of those who had fallen after baptism, were reserved for Lent. After the joyful Festival of Christmas and the Epiphany, they began to pray for the remission of sins, and to excite sinners to repentance, as we still do from Septuagesima-Sunday: for this is evidently the intent of the service of that time. The Lessons out of the book of Genesis place before our eyes the power of the Creator, his justice and his severity. We there see Adam driven out of the terrestrial Paradise; the guilty world destroyed by the deluge; the four infamous cities consumed by fire from heaven. Such as were moved by these examples, and the powerful exhortations of the Pastors, performed penance according to the rules I have mentioned in the second part of this work; and which, perhaps, were observed

* Serm. 14. n. 2. in App. Aug. † Nicol. I. ad Constant. Bul. c. 44. 45. 46.

with greater exactitude after the Church enjoyed full liberty. But the Communion was given to dying persons, after the danger of the persecutions had ceased.* No one, however exalted his rank in life might be, was exempt from doing penance: Princes were equally subjected thereto with private persons. The Emperor Philip submitted to it as early as the middle of the third century; and the example of Theodosius the Great will never be forgotten in the Church.

§ XLVII.—HERESIES SUPPRESSED.

THE authority of the Emperors made most of the ancient Heresies fall to the ground, by forbidding their meetings, and ordering their books to be searched for. Under the Heathen Emperors, the Catholics had no more liberty than the Heretics;† for the Heathens made no distinction between them: they equally despised and persecuted whatever bore the name of Christian. But after the laws of Constantine and his successors, they durst not assemble either in public or private, being every where watched by the Bishops. Most of them, therefore, were reunited to the Church, either sincerely or with dissimulation, notwithstanding the pains the Bishops took to distinguish the former from the latter: and such as remained obstinate, died without leaving any successors to con-

* Innocent, Ep. ad Exuper. 23.

† Soz. 2 hist. c. 32.
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tinue their doctrine. Most of these sects were not numerous, on account of the absurdity of their tenets, and the bad morals of those who professed them. The Valentinians, therefore, the Gnostics, the Marcionites, and other still more obscure sects, were no longer mentioned. The Manicheans lasted the longest, notwithstanding the penalty of death ordered against them.* The Arians, in the time of Constantine, did not as yet make a body by themselves; and under his successors they found but too much protection. For Heresy, in general, being a mere human invention, cannot long bear persecution.

Although the Church stands not in need of the temporal power to support it, she does not refuse its aid. The Bishops thought it right that the Princes should punish Heretics with banishment or fines, to intimidate them at least; but they were for sparing their lives.† The rule was general, that the Church persecuted none unto death.‡ It held in detestation the conduct of the Bishop Ithacus, who procured the death of the Heresiarch Priscilian: and we have several letters of St Augustine|| to beg of the Magistrates that they would pardon the *Circumcelliones*, a species of Montanists, convicted of the most horrid violences exercised against the Catholics, even to the

* L. 5. § II. Cod. de hæret. † Aug. Ep. 50. ad Bonif. & Ep. 93. ad Vic. ‡ Sev. Sulp. l. 2. || Ep. 100. r33. 134. 139.

committing of murder. He says, it would dishonour their sufferings in putting those to death, who had given them the crown of martyrdom; and if they were resolved to impose no other penalty on the guilty, they would reduce them to the necessity of not demanding justice. The Bishops, however, did not always obtain the pardon of their enemies, any more than of other criminals; and the Princes put the Heretics to death to preserve the tranquillity of the state.

§ XLVIII.—MANNERS of the CLERGY.

THE liberty of the Church introduced some change in the manner of living among the Bishops and the Clergy. It was then they began to wear some exterior marks of their profession; though the truth is that the difference was not sensible, till after the Barbarians became Masters, under whom the Clergy preserved the Roman dress, as well as their laws and language.

Many embraced the Cœnobitic life, as the most perfect after the example of the Church of Jerusalem. These all lived in the same house, and eat in the same room, as far as it could be done; at least they had nothing that they called their own, and subsisted on what the Church supplied them with. It was a large family, of which the Bishop was the Father. Such were the Clergy of St Eusebius of Vercelli, of St Martin, of St Augustine; and

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and they were called Canonical Clergy, or *Canons*, to distinguish them from those who did not live so exactly up to the Canons, whom the Church, however, employed.*

Those who did not live in the large community, were, at least, two or three together. The Priests, belonging to the Country-Churches, had young Clerics with them, whom they instructed, whose manners they formed, and were witnesses of their behaviour.† For it was ordered that all the Clergy in holy orders, Priests, Deacons, and Subdeacons should keep such strict watch over them, that their lives might be blameless.‡ The Bishop himself had a Priest or Deacon constantly with him, and who slept in his room: and he was called by the Greeks the *Syncellos*, which afterwards became a great dignity.§ St Gregory, Pope, had none but Clergymen and Monks in his palace.¶ He would not employ lay-servants for the most secret service of his bed-chamber; and the custom is still continued for all the Pope's domestics to the Clerics. These precautions were the consequences of celibacy; ¶ and, for the same reason, it was not judged proper that Ecclesiastics should have any

* V. Serm. Aug. de Vita comm. 355. 356. Conc. Car. c. 15. Conc. Aurel. iii. c. ii. V.

† Thomass. Dif. p. 1. l. I. c. 39. & p. 2. l. I. c. 31. & p. 3. lib. 2. 28. Conc. Vason. ii. c. 1. ‡ Tolet. ii. c. iv. c. 23. Emerit. c. 18. Aquisgran. c. 135.

§ Conc. Gerund. c. 6. Tolet. iv. c. 22.

¶ Conc. Rom. ap. Greg. iv. Ep. 44. ¶ Sev. sulp. in Vit. S. Mart.

great intimacy with women, under pretence of piety, or that they should receive any small presents from them, clothes, ornaments, fruit, or other refreshments, that shewed any thing of effeminacy. *

The respect for Ecclesiastics was great. Though the Bishops did not rank with the temporal powers, but lived like private men, without any particular pomp or show, they were nevertheless honoured by Magistrates and Princes themselves. I have taken notice of the honours Constantine paid to the Fathers, assembled at Nicæa. The Emperor Maximus entertained St Martin, with one of his Priests, at his own table; and the Empress, his consort, served him with her own hands.

It was, at that time, the custom of the Romans to give persons in high office, different titles, such as *Illustrious*, *Glorious*, *Respectable*, *most Famous*, which were regulated according to the rank of the persons to whom they were given. They gave the Bishops that of *Holy*, or *Blessed*; and joined thereto that of *Pious*, *Religious*, *Beloved of God*, and others such-like. These titles so properly belonged to Bishops, that they gave them to them even in the proceedings against them; as against Nestorius, in the Council of Ephesus; and against Dioscorus, in the Council of Calcedon. They gave them to Heretical Bishops; and in the Conference of Carthage, St Augustine scruples not to say, the *most*

* Hier. Ep. ad Nepot.

† V. Parcir. in Not. Imp.

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holy Emeritus, the *most holy* Petilian, though they were Donatists.—It would have been an affront to them, to have been wanting in these formalities.

The Name, *Pope*, or *Papa*, which signifies Father, but expressing a particular tenderness, was, for a long time, common to all the Bishops, and is still, at present, given to all the Priests in the Greek Church.* The expressions, *Pope Cornelius*, *Pope Julius*, and *Pope Athanasius*, were equally used. They had, also, the title of *Lord*; and nothing is more common, in the fourth and fifth centuries, than these sort of superscriptions to letters: *To the most holy, the most pious, and most venerable Lord N. Bishop*. It was an usual practice, as I have shewn, to prostrate before them, and kiss their feet. We must not, therefore, be surprized, if these honours, which appear to us so great, have been particularly paid to the Sovereign Pontiff, for whom the Faithful have always had a singular respect, and whom the Bishops themselves called *Father* and *Pope*, while he gave them the title of *Brethren*, as he still does. For the Roman Church has been more constant in observing its ancient usages than any other.†

The respect the temporal powers shewed the Bishops, gave them great authority to undertake the protection of widows, orphans, and of all deserving compassion,

* V. Baron. Not. ad Martyr. 10. Jan. lanoc. 1. inter Ep. Aug.

† V. Ep.

and particularly to beg the lives of criminals. Not but that these Saints had a zeal for justice; but they knew, very well, that there would always be sufficient examples of severity, and they laboured to save souls. Whether the condemned criminals were already Christians or not, it was, undoubtedly, a powerful motive to draw them either to repentance or to Baptism; and this act of mercy rendered the Church amiable, even to the Heathens.

§ XLIX.—POVERTY of the CLERGY.

AMIDST all these honours, Poverty was still recommended to them. In Africa, the Clergy, however learned they were in the word of God, were ordered to till the ground, or to follow some trade, in order to get wherewith to feed and clothe themselves, without prejudice to their functions.* But this ought rather to be understood of the inferior Clergy, for the most part, married men, than of Deacons and Priests, who had otherways, sufficient employment. St Epiphanius, however, certifies, that the greatest part of the Bishops and Priests joined manual labour with the preaching of the Gospel, choosing trades proper for their dignity and occupations. Not that they were ignorant of the right they had to their subsistence from the people, but to have the in-

* Conc. iv. Carth. c. 52. 53.

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ward satisfaction of not being burdensome to any one, and to be able to give more abundantly to the poor. St Basil excuses himself to Eusebius of Samosata, for not having written to him for a long time, because his Clerics were taken up with sedentary trades, by which they got their bread, and which did not allow them to travel from home. *

But, from whatever stock the subsistence of the Clergy arose, they were always to shew an example of Christian frugality and modesty. † The same Canons of Africa recommend to the Bishop a moderate table and ordinary furniture. These St Augustine faithfully complied with, as Possidius relates; and it is sufficiently seen what his usual meals were, since this historian tells us, that, besides pulse and herbs, he sometimes ordered meat and wine to be served up to his table, in favour of strangers. He declares he will wear no other dress, but what might become a Subdeacon, and might be given to a poor body. ‡ St Paulinus, at the same time, made use of wooden-spoons, and earthenware, he who had such immense riches. || St Martin visited his Diocese mounted on an ass, and very poorly clad. § The abstinences and fasts of St Lupus of Troyes, of St Germanus of Auxerres, of St Hilary of Arles, were a subject of admiration. It is observed of St Epiphanius, Bishop of Pavia, that he

* Ep. 263. † V. Thomass. Disc. p. i. l. 9. c. 9. 10. 11.

‡ Sermon. 2. de Vita comm.

|| Paul. Ep. 1. in fine.

§ Sulp. de Vit. I Mart. c.

never bathed, nor supped; and that he lived only on herbs and pulse.

In the East, St Basil eat nothing but bread and salt, and wore only one Tunic. St Gregory of Nazianzum lived in much the same manner. The enemies of St Chrysostome founded part of their calumnies on his eating by himself, and living very retired. And he himself blames any Bishop who would wear silk garments, ride on horseback, and have several servants to follow him; and who, having a house to live in, would be still for building.* And this is the amount of the accusations brought against Paul of Samosata in the preceding century. He was reproached with living in a dainty manner; with eating a great deal; with being well clothed, and accompanied by servants to go before and to follow him, approaching nearer the pomp of a Magistrate, than the simplicity of a Bishop.† He was however Bishop of Antioch, the capital of the East, and the third city in the world.

People had been so much accustomed to see modest Bishops, that the malicious and indiscreet took from thence an occasion unjustly to censure those who were a little less so. The same St Chrysostome complains of this, "There are those," says he, "who find fault with a Bishop for going to the bath; for eating and drinking like other people; for having a man servant to wait

* Hom. 9. in Ep. ad Philem. an. 270.

† Conc. Antioch.

"on him, and a mule to carry him."* Thus Ammianus Marcellinus, † a Heathen and an enemy to the Christians, fails not to take notice of the difference there was, even in the exterior, between the Pope and the Bishops in the Provinces, from the end of the fourth century; as if it had been any thing surprising, that the Bishop of the Capital of the world should have a carriage to enable him to go into the different quarters of so large a city; that he should be well dressed, and keep a good table, where he might receive whatever was greatest in the Empire. It is true, St Gregory of Nazianzum, more worthy of credit, speaks in much the same manner of the Bishops of the great cities, ‡ But Ammianus grants, that there were still in the Provinces, many Bishops, who rendered themselves recommendable to God and man, by the frugality of their tables, their poverty of dress, and the modesty of their countenances. § St Jerome, immediately after this time, calls Pope Anastasius a man of rich poverty; and in the following age, Denis the Little says that Pope Gelasius was poor to enrich others. ||

§ L.—RICHES of the CHURCHES.

IN fact, the poverty of these holy Bishops was purely voluntary, in the midst of the

* Hom. 3. in Ep. ad Tit. † Lib. 27. c. 3. ‡ Or. 20, 23. § Ad Demet. c. 8. || Præf. in Canon.

great riches of the Churches, which was one of the first effects of the liberty the Christians enjoyed. What I have to say on this subject, will be believed with difficulty, though the proofs be certain. All the lives of the Popes, from St. Sylvester and the beginning of the fourth century, to the close of the ninth, are full of the presents made to the Roman Church by the Popes, by the Emperors, and some private individuals. And these presents are not only of Vessels of gold and silver, but of houses in Rome, and lands in the country, not only in Italy, but in different Provinces of the Empire. I will content myself with mentioning the offering specified by Anastasius under Pope St. Sylvester. He may have been mistaken in attributing to Constantine the Great, what might have been given by some other Emperor, perhaps by Constantine Ponogatus, or by the son of Irene. But no one will imagine that he invented all these particulars. And, at whatever time these offerings were made, they equally shew the riches of the Churches. Here then follows what Anastasius describes as subsisting in his time, in the Basilie of Constantine, which is the same as the Lateran: A silver Tabernacle, weighing two thousand and twenty-five pounds, having, in front, a Saviour seated, five feet high, and weighing a hundred and twenty pounds; and the twelve Apostles, each of five feet, weighing ninety pounds, with crowns of fine silver. Behind was another image of the Saviour, of five feet, weighing one hundred and forty pounds,

pounds, and four Angels of silver, five feet each, and weighing one hundred and fifteen pounds, set with precious stones. Besides this, there were four crowns of the purest gold; that is to say, circles bearing Chandeliers, adorned with twenty Dolphins, each weighing fifteen pounds; seven Altars of silver, of two hundred pounds weight; seven Patins of gold, each thirty pounds weight; forty Chalices of gold, each one pound; five hundred silver Chalices, each two pounds weight; one hundred and sixty Candlesticks, of which forty-five weighed thirty pounds each, and the others twenty pounds, besides several other Vessels.

In the Baptistery, the Tub was of Porphyry, all covered with silver, to the weight of three thousand and eight pounds: there was also a lamp of gold, weighing thirty pounds, in which were burnt two hundred pounds of balm; a lamb of silver pouring out water, of thirty pounds weight; a Saviour of the finest silver, five feet high, weighing one hundred and seventy pounds: And on the left-hand, a John the Baptist of silver, of a hundred pounds weight; and seven stags of silver, pouring out water, each eight hundred pounds weight; a Censer of the purest gold, of ten pounds weight, set with forty-two precious stones. The whole of what he gave to the Basilic and to the Baptistery, amounted to six hundred and seventy pounds weight of gold, and to nineteen thousand six hundred and seventy-three pounds weight of silver.

silver; and as the Roman pound was only twelve ounces, the whole amounts to one thousand and seventeen marks of gold, and twenty-nine thousand five hundred marks of silver, without reckoning the fashion; valuing the mark of gold at four hundred and fifty livres,* and the mark of silver at thirty livres.† Constantine gave moreover to the Basilic and to the Baptistry, in houses and land, thirteen thousand nine hundred and thirty-four golden pence, annual income; which comes nearly to a hundred and fifteen thousand Livres, reckoning the penny of gold at eight livres five sols of our money, according to the calculations of Monsieur le Blanc, in his historical Treatise of the coins of France. All this belonged to the Church of the Lateran alone.

Constantine built seven other Churches at Rome; as those of St Peter, St Paul, Holy Cross of Jerusalem, St Agnes, St Laurence, St Peter, and St Marcellinus; and he made great presents to that which St Sylvester had built. He caused also a Church to be built at Ostia, one at Albano, one at Capria, and one at Naples. What belonged to all these Churches, in vessels of gold and silver, amounts to one thousand three hundred and fifty-nine marks of gold, and to twelve thousand four hundred and thirty-seven marks of silver, which come to more than nine hundred and fourscore thousand livres, || without

* 19l. 13s. 9d. sterl.

† 1l. 6s. 3d. sterl.

‡ 5031l. 5s.

|| 42875l. sterl.

reckon-

reckoning the fashion. Their revenues amounted to seventeen thousand seven hundred and seventeen golden pence, that is to say, to upwards of a hundred and forty thousand French livres;* and the value of above twenty thousand livres (855l. sterling) in divers Aromatics, which the lands of Egypt and the East were to furnish in kind, reckoning them only at the present prices, much less, beyond comparison, than they were then. The Church of St Peter at Rome, for instance, had houses in Antioch, and lands in the neighbourhood. It had possessions at Tarsus in Cilicia, at Alexandria, and all over Egypt: It had some as far as in the Province of the Euphrates; and part of these lands were obliged to furnish certain quantities of the oils of spikenard, balm, storax, cinnamon, saffron, and other valuable drugs, for the Censers and Lamps.

Add to this, the Churches which Constantine and St Helena, his mother, caused to be built, at Jerusalem, at Bethlehem, and all over the Holy Land; that of the twelve Apostles, and the others he founded at Constantinople; for he built all the Churches, that of Nicomedia, that of Antioch, worthy of the grandeur of the city. Add to this, the largesses he made to all the Churches throughout the Empire.†—Add again what the succeeding Emperors gave them; what also the Governors and other great Lords gave when they became

* 6125l. sterling. † V. *Enf. de Vit. Const.* l. 3. c. 34, 35, &c. l. 5. c. 58, 59. *Enf. de Vit.* l. 4. c. 18.

Christians; the liberalities of the holy Ladies, who abandoned such rich possessions to embrace Christian poverty, as at Rome St Paula and St Melania; at Constantinople, St Olympias, and so many others: Add lastly, the gifts of the Bishops, all of whom strove with one another in taking care to adorn and to enrich his own Church; and judge then what must have been the riches of the Churches in the great cities, the capitals of the Provinces, every one of which we should now reckon a kingdom.

And, indeed, we see that the Church of Alexandria was wonderfully rich in the time of St John the Almoner, who dispensed in so holy a manner its great income. We see, by the letters of St Gregory, the multitude of business the patrimonies of the Roman Church, scattered in so many countries, in Sicily, in Spain, and in Gaul, gave him: The care he took, that the slaves who cultivated these lands were used well, and that the revenues were applied to assist the poor of the country itself.* There is nothing in all this hard to be believed by any one who has any idea of the grandeur and riches of the Roman Empire, where it was common for private individuals to bequeath by will to their friends whole villages together with the inhabitants. There were moreover great possessions allotted to the support and ornament of the Idols. Large sums were yearly laid out for the sacrifices, the public

* Vit. Greg. per Jo. Diac. l. 2. c. 53, &c.

sports, and the other ceremonies of the false religion. It was an easy thing to enrich the Churches with a part of what was lost in these vain expences; but one of the first funds with which they were endowed, were what had been confiscated belonging to the Christians, during the persecution.*

All these great riches of the Church were entirely at the disposal of the Bishops. But these holy Prelates were so far from rejoicing thereat, that they complained of it, and regretted the time, when the daily oblations of the Faithful sufficed to feed the poor and the Clergy, and answered all the wants of the Churches.† St Augustine several times offered to give up his Church-lands; but his people would never take them.‡ St Chrysostome reproaches the Christians that, by their avarice and hardness of heart, they had forced the Bishops to secure settled incomes on the Churches, lest the virgins, the widows, and the other poor should die of hunger, if they had relied, as in the first ages, on casual alms. “From hence, says he, arrive two inconveniences; you remain useless, and the Priests of God are taken up with what is not proper for them.” And, afterwards; “the Bishops are more burdened with these concerns, than Intendants, Comptrollers, or those who farm the revenues; and, instead of

* Euf. Vit. l. 2. c. 35, &c. † Conc. Antioch. An. 341. can. ult.—Tomass. P. I. lib. 3. c. 11

‡ Possid. vit. c. 24.

“ turning all their thoughts to the salvation
 “ of your souls, they are daily perplexed
 “ with what ought to be the employment of
 “ Collectors and Treasurers.” And again;
 “ your inhumanity renders us ridiculous,
 “ since we quit prayer, instruction, and o-
 “ ther holy occupations, to be constantly
 “ disputing with wine-merchants, corn-mer-
 “ chants, and the venders of other commo-
 “ dities. So that we have surnames given
 “ us, which would better become secu-
 “ lars.”* They found means, however, to
 disembarraßs themselves of this management
 of temporalities. They discharged them-
 selves of it at first on the Archdeacons, and
 afterwards on the *Oeconomi*, or those of
 the Clergy destined to that function alone.
 And to ease themselves even in the concerns
 of piety, they prevailed on the Princes to
 establish, in every town, a Defender of the
 Poor.† These were their protectors, and
 solicitors of charities for them.

§ LI.—HOSPITALS.

ONE considerable part of what belonged
 to the Church, was applied to the
 founding and supporting Hospitals; for it
 was then they began. The policy of the
 Greeks and Romans went a great way to-
 wards banishing idleness, and sturdy beg-

* In Matt. xxvii. 10. hom. 85.
 v. can. 9. An. 398. & ibid. Baron. n. 33.

† Conc. Carth.

gars : but we see no public order to take care of the poor wretches, who were past work. It was thought better that they should die, than to live useless, and in a state of suffering; and if they had any little courage left, they soon dispatched themselves. The Christians, having chiefly in view the salvation of the souls, neglected none; and the most abandoned of all were those they judged the most worthy of their care. They provided not only for their own poor, but even for those of the Heathens. Julian,* the Apostate, testifies this with confusion, when he ordered Arsacius, Pontiff of Galatia, to establish hospitals, in imitation of the Christians, and to raise contributions for the poor. He attributes the growth of Christianity chiefly to three causes; to their hospitality, their care of burying the dead, and their gravity of manners.

The Christians assisted the poor two different ways. One was barely giving them alms, and leaving them to get lodgings, where they could find them. There was in each quarter of Rome a place called the *Deaconry*, which was, as it were, the public office for distributing these alms. A Deacon resided here, and received for this purpose a certain sum, of which he gave in an account.* The other way of assisting the poor, and of the most advantage to them, was to lodge and feed them in common.†

* Ep. 49.

† Baron. ad Martyr. 8 Aug.

‡ Greg. I. l. 9. Ep. 24. V. Caf. 8. Coll. c. 7. & 21. Coll. c. 1.

For this reason, as soon as the Church enjoyed liberty, different houses of charity were built, but in Greek they were distinguished by different names, according to the different sorts of poor, who were received into them.

The House, where little children at the breast, foundlings or others, were brought up, was called *Brephotrophium*; that for Orphans, *Orphanotrophium*. *Nosecomium* was the hospital for the sick. *Xenodochium*, where strangers and travellers were entertained, which was properly called in Latin, *Hospitium*, Hospital, or house of Hospitality. *Gerontocomium*, was the retreat of old people. *Ptochotrophium* was the general place of reception for all the poor. There were some of these houses of charity, before these names were given them; and others were built very soon in all the great towns.* It was usually a Priest who had the intendency over them, as at Alexandria, St Isidorus, under the Patriarch Theophilus; at Constantinople, St Zoticus, and afterwards St Sampson.† There were also some private individuals who kept up Hospitals at their own expence, as St Pammachius at Porto, St Gallicanus at Ostia.‡ This latter had been a Patrician and Consul; and it was a wonder to see a man of his rank, who had worn triumphal ornaments, and enjoyed the friendship of the Emperor Constantine; I say, it

* Aug. in Joan. Tract. 97. c. 4.
Dec. 827. Jun. • ‡ Mart. 25. Jun.

† Baron, ad 3.

was this wonder to see such a man wash the feet of the poor, wait on them at table, and afford every comfort to the sick, that drew such a concourse of people from all parts.

The holy Bishops spared nothing to furnish to these expences. They took also great care to bury the dead, and to ransom the captives, who had been taken by the Barbarians, which often happened in the decline of the Empire. They sold every thing, even to the sacred vessels, in these two last sort of alms: so great was their privilege. St Exuperius, Bishop of Toulouse (the example is famous) reduced himself by that means, to such a state of poverty, that he carried the body of our Lord in a basket, and the blood in a chalice of glass.* And St Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, after having sold every thing, became himself a slave to redeem a widow's son. † Thus the great treasures of the Church, the gold and silver with which they were adorned, were only, as it were, a deposite, till an occasion presented itself of employing them in an useful manner; such as any public calamity, a mortality, or a famine. Every thing gave place to the preserving the living temples of the Holy Ghost. Slaves, likewise, who served in the Empire, were ransomed, particularly if they were Christians, and their Masters were Heathens or Jews. ‡

* Hier. ad Rust. & Mart. hom. 28. Sept. † Greg. 2. Dial. c. I. ‡ Joan. Dia. Vit. S. Greg. l. 4. c. 43.

§ LII.—MONASTERIES.

LASTLY, it was at this time, and after the Church enjoyed liberty, that Monasteries began to be founded. In the time of persecutions, many Christians had retired into the deserts, but chiefly into those that were in the neighbourhood of Egypt; and some of them spent there the remainder of their lives, as St Paul did, who is reckoned the first Hermit.* St Anthony, after having led for some time the Ascetic life, near the place of his birth, withdrew into the desert, there to exercise himself with more liberty and safety, removing, as far as he could, from all the temptations he might meet with on the part of men.† He was the first, who assembled together Disciples in the Desert; and made them there live in common. They were no longer simply named *Ascetics*, though they led the same life; they were called *Monachi*, or Monks, that is to say, Solitaries; or they were called *Hermits*, that is to say, inhabitants of the Desert. Those, who lived in Communities, were called *Cœnobites*; and those *Anchorets*, who withdrew into greater solitude, after having lived in community a long time, and learnt there to overcome their passions. The Cœnobites themselves, however, lived very solitary lives, since they saw no living soul but their brethren, being remote, several days journey,

* Hier. Vit. S. Pauli.

† Vita. S. Anton.

from

from every habitation of man, in the driest deserts, whither even water was to be carried. They never even saw one another, but in the evening and in the night-time, at the hours of prayer; spending the whole day in work in their cells, either quite alone, or two and two together; and always observing a strict silence. Add to this, that the Cells were at a great distance one from another; for they were not streightened for room in these immense deserts.

St Anthony, St Hilarion, St Pacomius, and the rest, who followed their example, did not aim at introducing any novelty; or to go beyond the virtue of their Fathers. They wished only to preserve the tradition of the strict practice of the Gospel, which they found to grow slacken every day. They always proposed to themselves, as models, those Ascetics who had gone before them; such as in Egypt, according to what Cassian says, * were the Disciples of St Mark, who lived in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, shut up in houses, praying, meditating on the scriptures, using manual labour, and taking their food only at night. They proposed to themselves the example of the primitive Church of Jerusalem, that of the Apostles, and even of the Prophets. They sought not to make themselves admired by an extraordinary way of life, but to live like true Christians.† This is seen in the Greater Rules of St Basil,‡ which are no

* Cass. 18. Inst. † Hier. ad Paulin. Item. ad Rustic.
‡ S. Bas. Reg. fus. n. 22.

more than, an abridgement of the morality of the Gospel, which he proposes, in general, to all. He says, for instance, with regard to dress, that a Christian ought to content himself with being covered for decency's sake, and to screen himself from cold and other injuries of the air, but with the least trouble possible; contenting himself with only one garment, which may serve for day and night: a thing very practicable in the country where he lived. There are few things in this Rule, which regard, in particular, persons separated from the world.

What was particular in the Monks, was their renouncing marriage, the possession of temporal goods, and the company of other men, even of the Faithful and their Relations. In every other respect, they were a set of good Laymen, living by their own labour, observing silence, exercising themselves in combating their vices one after another: * to the end that, having fought a lawful fight, as St Paul says, † they might arrive at that purity of heart, which would render them worthy to see God. All their practices were grounded on these principles. St Chrysostome relates a memorable story of a young man, whose mother, wishing to make him a good Christian, engaged a virtuous Monk to become his preceptor. ‡ For this holy man, to instruct him in piety, only

* Cass. Inst. 5. c. 12. 16. & lib. 6. c. 7. † 1 Cor. ix. 25. 2. Tim. II. 5. Matt. v. 8. ‡ Chrys. ad Fidel. Patr.

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trained him up in private, in all the practices of the Monastic life, under the outward appearance of leading an ordinary life.

A continual Fast, in the first place, aimed at subduing intemperance; and then at preventing temptations of impurity, and rendering the mind more free, and fitter to apply to heavenly things.* But such was their discretion, that they preserved sufficient strength to work continually, and sleep little, without, however, destroying their health; so that they lived to a great age, without any sickness.† The lives of the Fathers of the Desert take notice of a great number, who lived fourscore or ninety years; several a hundred, and some even more. The instances of longevity are found chiefly among the Egyptians, who were acknowledged to be the discreetest of all; and after mature deliberations, grounded on long experience, confined their manner of fasting to eat every day, after None, two small loaves of six ounces each, and to drink nothing but water. ‡

The Desert was of service against the temptations of impurity and avarice, in order to lose, as much as possible, even the remembrance of the objects that might excite them. They combated avarice by their extreme poverty, and by their fidelity in having no property, and distributing every day the price of their labour, after taking out of it their own subsistence; and these alms were

* Cass. Inst. l. 5.

† Id. Coll. 24. Inst. l. 5.

‡ Cass. collat. 3. c. 19.

so considerable, as St Augustine relates, that they freighted whole vessels with them.* Lastly, they combated anger by silence and keeping company with one another, which obliged them to bear with one another's faults and imperfections: they encountered sloth by perpetual labour; sorrowfulness by prayer and singing of psalms; vanity and pride by obedience and mortification.†

There were some Monks, who worked in the fields, either for themselves, or hired themselves out, like other workmen, for the harvest and the vintage.‡ It was hence, perhaps, that the division into tens, or decanies arose, each of which was headed by a Dean: || for thus the ancients divided their slaves at their work.§ The more perfect among the Monks thought these kinds of work too dissipating, and remained shut up in their cells, making rush-mats, wicker-baskets, or such-like things, which did not hinder them from meditating on the holy scriptures, and having their minds fixed on God.¶ There were none who had not some bodily employment, were it only the transcribing of books: and the Euchites or Massalians, who pretended to substitute prayer for labour, were accounted heretics.**

A life, so poor, so hard, and mean in appearance, drew, in fact, on the Monks the

* De. Mor. Eccl. l. c. 67.
in Matt.

† Reg. S. Ben. c. 48.

‡ Chrys. hom. 72.

|| lb. c. 21.

§ Columella. l. i. c. ult.

¶ Cass. Collat. 24. de

Mortif. c. 3. 4. &c.

** Epiph. har. 80.

contempt of sensual Heathens, and even of some Christians.* They cast their low jokes on them; some even used violence towards them, so far as to strike them, pull them out of their cells, drag them before the tribunal of the Judges; † all which only served to make their humility and patience to shine the brighter. And they were, therefore, beloved and honoured by all persons of sense, not only amongst the common people, but likewise among the great; not by the Laity only, but by the Priests and the Bishops themselves; so that the most holy and most capable among them were often chosen to be promoted to the Ecclesiastical ministry, and even to the Episcopacy itself. They then quitted their monasteries, and returned to an intercourse with the world, like other Clergymen. It does not appear that, in these early ages, all the Monks bound themselves equally. ‡ St Basil says that the Monks bound themselves to Celibacy, only tacitly. § But he thinks it proper they should make an express profession of it; that in case they should return to a voluptuous life, they may be subjected to penance.

St Chrysostome speaks of the return of a Monk into the world, as of an action entirely free, when he advises a father to engage his son in that holy way of life, as soon as he is capable of sinning, at about the

* Aug. de Op. Monach.

† Cass. 17. Callat. c. 21.

‡ Chrys. adv. Vitup.

§ Ad. Amphil. c. 19.

age of ten years; and to leave him there as long, as may be necessary to perfect him in virtue, as ten or twenty years.* This Saint himself quitted the Monastic life at the expiration of five years, to recover his health. But we see by the manner in which he reproaches his friend Theodorus, how blameable those were, who, together with the Monastic life, abandoned the practice of virtue, through inconstancy, disgust, or from any other bad motive. St Augustine expressly says,† that those who withdraw from the Monastery, act contrary to their vow, and contract guilt by not fulfilling it. The Church subjected them to penance; but with respect to any temporal effect, their only punishment was the shame of having changed their mind.

So bright was the sanctity of the Monastic life, that, in a short time, there were several thousands all over the East, not only Monks, but even Monasteries. There were to the number of 50,000 Monks who followed the Rule of St Pacomius alone, distributed into several houses, under the direction of an Abbot, who all met together to celebrate Easter.‡ Nothing was easier than the establishment of these Monasteries. They had neither lands nor other possessions that could raise envy. They wanted no body's leave or assistance to abandon all and with-

* Ad Fidel. Patrem. † in Ps. 75. 11. in Ps. 93. c. 12. ‡ Chrys. hom. 14. in Ep. 1. Tim.—Aug. de Mor. Eccl. 1. 67.—Hier. Præf. in Reg. S. Pacom. & Ep. ad Eustoch.—Chrys. ad Fidel. Patr.

draw to places uninhabited; there to build poor cells of wood or reeds, which were at hand, and live in silence and labour; and this not only without being a burden to any one, but to become useful to the public, by such alms, as I have specified above. I speak of the earliest times. For when the Monks began to quit their Deserts, to meddle in civil or Ecclesiastical affairs, the Council of Chalcedon forbid the establishing any new Monastery without the permission of the Bishop.* The Monasteries encreased to such a degree, that there were some even in places inhabited, and in the neighbourhood of towns: Nor would it have been just, that such fertile countries as Italy, Sicily, and Greece, should have been deprived of this advantage. But the Monks still continued, even there, their retired way of life, strictly observing inclosure and silence.

When they were near enough the towns, they came to the public Church to hear the instructions of the Bishop, and to partake of the sacred Mysteries. They had a particular place allotted them, that they might be all together, separated from the others, like the Virgins and Widows.† But this did not hinder them from having Oratories in their own houses, there to say their prayers together at the appointed hours. Those who were at a distance, had Priests among them to perform the Office, and administer the Sacraments to them: And, at last, it was

* An. 535. can. 4.

† Ambr. ad Virg. laps. c. 6.

judged

judged proper, that there should be at least one Priest in each Monastery, with a Deacon or two; and this Priest was often the Abbot. Having thus no occasion of going out, they remained shut up in the Monasteries, like dead men in their graves. This was the pretext which the Heresiarch Eutyches alledged, not to present himself at the Council of Constantinople, before St Flavian.*

There were likewise Monasteries of Nuns, even in the Deserts, where they abode near enough to the Monks, to be of mutual help to one another, and far enough off to avoid all danger and suspicion. The Monks built cells for them, and assisted them, in all their rural labours; the Nuns made the clothes for the Monks, and rendered them all other like services. But all this intercourse of charity was practised by some chosen old men, who alone came near the Monastery of the Nuns. We see an instance of these Monasteries in that which the sister of St Pacomius founded.† There were some also in the towns, and all the Virgins consecrated to God, who formerly lived in private houses, were now obliged thus to live in community. The Nuns of Egypt and Syria cut off their hair for the sake of cleanliness:‡ In other places they kept it; and the practices of antiquity have been different in this point.¶ St Chry-

* Conc. Chalc. A.D. I.

† Hier. Ep. 41. ad Sabin.
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‡ Vit. S. Pacom. c. 28.

¶ Baron. ad. Martyr. 13.

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Costume describes as follows the dress of the Virgins in his time. A blue vest tied with a girdle, black sharp-pointed shoes, a white veil over the forehead, a black cloke that covered the head and whole body.* The pictures made for the blessed Virgin seem to have been taken from this dress.

The Bishops, who made their Clergy live in community, took for their model the life of the Monks; and conformed thereto, as far as the active life of the Clergy would allow them. And, indeed, these communities are often called *Monasteries*; and in process of time, they became totally confounded with them. In the fifth century most of the Bishops and Priests of Gaul and of the West practised the Monastic life, and wore the dress.† The Pope St Gregory, being taken from a Monastery, where he shut himself up, after having quitted all the grandeur of the world, continued ever after to live like a Monk, and filled his palace with holy Monks, out of whose number he drew several eminent Bishops; among the rest, St Augustine, and the other Apostles of England.‡

The true design of the Monastic life was, to lead to the most sublime perfection, those pure souls, who had preserved the innocence of their baptism; or converted sinners, who wished to purify themselves by repentance. This was the reason why persons of every

* Hom. 8. in 1. Tim. ii. 9. † Thomafs. Disc. 2.
P. I. c. 34, 35, 36. || Joan. Diac. l. 2. c. 11, 12.

age and condition were admitted; such as young children offered by their parents, to withdraw them early from the dangers of the world; and old men, who desired to end their lives in a holy manner; married men, whose wives consented on their part to lead the same kind of life. We see regulations for all these sorts of different people, in the Rule of Fructuosus, Bishop of Braga. Those, who, for their crimes, were obliged by the canons to perform penances of several years, undoubtedly found it more convenient to spend these years in a Monastery, where the example of the Community, and the comforting advice of the Elders supported them, than to lead a singular life amidst other Christians.* And in reality, the Monasteries became a sort of prison or banishment, which was the punishment of the greatest Lords, as we see in France, under the two first races of our Kings; and in the East from the sixth century.

§ LIII.—*Comparative View of the Monastic Life, and that of the First Christians.*

THE Monastic life is a striking proof of the Providence of God, and of the care he has taken to preserve in his Church, to the end of time, not only the purity of doctrine, but the practice of every virtue. For, if what I have said in the Second Part

* Reg. Comm. 6, 7, 8, 16, 19. Cod. Regul. T. 2.

of the Lives of the Christians, be recalled to mind, and compared with the Rule of St Benedict, and the present practices of well-regulated Monasteries, it will be seen that the difference is small.

I there said that the Christians considered Religion as the main point, and made all temporal concerns give place to it: And this is what the Monks do, who have separated themselves from the world, to attend with liberty to the *one thing necessary*; and who, from hence, have been called *Religious*, as, at first, all good Christians were called. The Monks, the Ascetes, and the Virgins, were also called *devout* people, because they were entirely devoted to God.

The Christians prayed often both in common together, and in private by themselves; coming as near as they could to continual prayer. The singing of Psalms is no where better regulated, nor more exactly observed, than in the Monasteries, where it is still the same as St Benedict ordered it near thirteen hundred years ago. The Monks, having nothing to call them away from this duty, have complied more exactly with it than the Clergy themselves; and it is thought that they compleated the bringing it to that form, which it has now had for a long time. The Greeks therefore refer their *Typics* or Rubrics to the usages of the most famous Monasteries. They were the Monks who introduced the public Offices of Prime and Complin, which at first were only domestic prayers,

ers, to begin and end the day in a holy manner, in each Christian family or Monastery. Cassian* testifies that the establishment was new in his time. In all these respects we must consider *Canons* or *Prebendaries* as *Monks*: And in fact, at first, they were all Regulars. The Christians communicated often; so did the Monks for the most part:† The Disciples of St Apollo, as Rufinus relates, communicated every day. The Monks, for a long time, preserved the ancient custom of keeping the Eucharist at home, to communicate themselves, when there was no Priest at hand. It was perhaps for want of this precaution, that some remained for the space of two years without receiving the Communion.‡

The Christians applied themselves to the reading of the holy scriptures; and this also is recommended in the Rule of St Benedict,|| particularly in Lent, and every Sunday, instead of manual labour, which took up the greatest part of the other days; and of which there still remain some footsteps, although it must be owned that, of all the Monastic practices, this has been the worst kept up.

Silence was necessary, as I observed before, to avoid the sins of the tongue, so common among men, and nevertheless so strongly condemned in scripture; such as slander, detraction, scoffing, scurrility, all impertinent and unprofitable talk: And it is obser-

* Inst. l. 4. c. 6. † S. Bas. Ep. 280. ad Casar. Patr.

‡ Chrys. hom. 17. in Ep. ad Heb. || Reg. c. 48.

ved, that those Monasteries are the best regulated, where silence is the most rigorously observed. The names of *Fathers* or *Brothers*, according to the age and dignity of the persons, were, from the beginning, common among the Christians. They were submissive to their superiors, and all who had authority over them: They lived in perfect union with one another: They exercised hospitality towards their brethren, and gave alms to the poor. All this is still found practised in all Monasteries.

§ LIV.—*Reasons of the singular Exterior of the Monks.*

BUT, some one will say, if the Monks only aimed at living like good Christians, why have they affected an exterior so different from that of other men? What purpose does it serve to distinguish one's self so much in things that are indifferent? Why this dress, this shape of the clothes, these singularities in their food, in their hours of sleep, in their manner of lodging? In a word, what end is answered by whatever makes them appear, as so many different nations scattered among Christian nations? Why such a diversity among the different Orders of Religious in every respect, which are neither commanded nor forbidden by the law of God? Does it not seem, that they wanted to strike the eyes of the people, to

draw respect and favours? This is what many think, and what some say, judging rashly, for want of knowing antiquity. For if any one will be at the trouble to examine this exterior of the Monks and other Religious, he will see that all this is no more than some remains of ancient manners, which they have faithfully preserved during several ages, while the rest of the world have changed in an astonishing manner.

To begin by the dress: St. Benedict* says that the Monks ought to content themselves with a Vest and Cowl, with a Scapulary for work. A Vest without a cloke had long been the dress of the lower class of people, and the cowl was a hood worn by the country people and the poor.† This dress of the head became common to every body in the following ages; and being convenient in cold weather, it continued to be worn in Europe, till about three hundred years ago. Not only the Clergy and men of letters, but the nobles themselves and the courtiers wore cowls or Capuches, and hoods of different sorts. The Cowl, mentioned in St. Benedict's Rule, served for a Cloke; and it is the *Coulle* of the Cistercian Monks, the very name coming from thence; and the frock of the other Benedictines comes from the same origin.‡ St. Benedict also gives them a Scapulary to work in. It was much broader

* Reg. c. 55.
popello. Hor. l. Ep. 7.
cullo. Mart.

† *Vilia vendentem tunicato scuta*
‡ *Pullo Mævius alget in cu-*

and shorter than it is at present; and served, as the name implies, for a defence to the shoulders in carrying burdens, and to save the Vest. It had its hood like the cowl; and these two garments were worn separately, the scapulary at work, and the cowl in the Church, or abroad. Since that time, the Monks have considered the scapulary as the principal part of their dress: And therefore they never quit it, and put the frock, or the coulle, above it.

It appears, therefore, that St Benedict gave his Monks no other dress but that of the poor people of his country; and they were scarce distinguished by any thing, but by an entire uniformity of dress, which was necessary, in order that the same clothes might serve indifferently for all the Monks of the same Convent. Now one cannot be surprized, if after near thirten hundred years, some difference in colour and shape should have been introduced among the Monks who follow the Rule of St Benedict, according to the countries and the different Reformations; and as to the Religious Orders which have been established within these five hundred years, they have kept the dress they found in use. Not to wear linen, appears to us now a great piece of austerity: But the use of linen did not become common till long after St Benedict's time: And scarce any is worn as yet in Poland and all over Turkey: They sleep without sheets, with half their clothes on. However, before even the

the use of linen sheets came in, it was an usual thing to sleep quite naked, as is still done in Italy; and therefore the Rule orders the Monks to sleep with their clothes on, without even taking off their girdle.

As to their food, I have already taken notice, that it was a common thing, not only among the Christians, but even among the most rational of the Heathens, to live on pulse and on fish, and to have reading during meal-time. I have likewise shewn that the Christians often fasted, besides the solemn fasts of the Church, and that they said long prayers before and after meals. St Benedict therefore ordered nothing that was unusual; on the contrary, he used great condescension, in allowing his Monks two sorts of dressed meats, and a little wine.* The hours of meals and sleep which the Monks observe, were the same that every body observed until the two last centuries. They dined at nine or ten o'clock in the morning, as the working people still do, or even sooner; and they supped at six o'clock in the evening. The regulations of the Police with regard to *Curfew*, and the time which people were allowed to work at the forges, shew that they reckoned the night's rest from eight o'clock in the evening until four o'clock in the morning,† which is the fairest rule for taking the exact middle of the night, and to lose as little as possible of the day.

* Reg. c. 39, 40.

† Philip. Com. l. 2. c. 13.

The Dormitory, without being divided by cells, as is marked in the Rule of St Benedict, shews better the living in community. It is properly living together, to sleep in the same room, and to eat in the same hall. Poverty is better shewn, and virtue is better secured. For it is easy for the Superior to observe with a single glance, that nothing passes contrary to modesty, since the Rule prescribes that there shall always be a light in the Dormitory, that the beds be open, consisting only of a straw-bed with coverlets. This practice is still observed in hospitals. The Cells of the first Monks, who inhabited the Deserts, were little huts, separated from each other, like those of the Carthusians, or Camaldulians. Sometimes two or three Monks lodged together in one of these huts: For which reason, the lesser Monasteries, which we now call *Priories*, were formerly called *Cells*. They were also called *Casas*; and both these names seem to have been taken from the cabins of the slaves; for the Monks have kept up whatever was suitable to the poorest and most despised of the common people.

Lastly, I think I can trace out, in the Monasteries, footsteps of the disposition of the ancient houses of the Romans, as described in Vitruvius and Palladio. Their Church, which is always seen first, to the end that the entrance might be open to the Seculars, seems to have succeeded to the first hall, which the Romans called *Atrium*. From thence
was

was a passage into a Court furrounded with covered Galleries, and which was usually called by the Greek name of *Peristyle*; and this is exactly the Cloister, where you come from the Church, and go to other parts of the building, as to the Chapter-house, which is the *Exhedra* of the ancients; to the Refectory, which is the *Triclinium*; and the Garden is commonly behind all the rest, as it was in the ancient houses.

However this may be, it is certain that the Saints, who gave Rules to the Monks, never sought to introduce novelties, nor to distinguish themselves by any singularity of life. What makes the Monks now appear so extraordinary, is the change that has happened in the manners of other people; just as the most ancient buildings are now become singular, because they are the only ones which have resisted a long succession of ages. And as the most learned Architects study with care the remains of ancient buildings, knowing that their art has been restored in the latter times only by those excellent models: In the same manner ought Christians to observe exactly what is practised in the most regular Monasteries, to see living examples of Christian morality. I know that there are few either of these material or spiritual edifices, that time has entirely spared; and that there remain but a few disfigured ruins of them. However, by studying these ruins, by searching after the least fragments of these valuable antiquities, and comparing them

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them with what is written in books, we come to the knowledge of the proportions of the entire works, and to penetrate the true sense of the books. In like manner, great advantage may be reaped from searching into the Monastic practices, if we join thereto the study of the Rules, the Canons, the Gospel, and the lives of the Saints in every age. Let us, in the mean time, acknowledge, that the Monasteries are the treasuries of all sorts of Antiquities. It is there where have been found the greatest part of those ancient Manuscripts, which have been made use of to restore Literature: It is there the writings of the Fathers, and the Canons of the Councils have also been found. Very curious Ecclesiastical Antiquities are daily discovered in the written Usages of the ancient Monasteries. In a word, the purest practice of the Gospel has been preserved in them, while it has all along been more corrupted in the world.

§ LV.



§ LV. PART IV.

RELAXATION of MANNERS amongst the
CHRISTIANS.

IT now remains for me to account for this decay and relaxation of manners: And after having represented the Manners of the Ancient Christians, I think I ought to join thereto the principal causes of the prodigious difference there is between their manners and ours. It is such, that many, I doubt not, will find the account I have given like that which Travellers give us of the way of living among the Indians and the Chinese; and that the more ignorant will scarce credit what they do not understand the proofs of, which, however, will be clear to people of learning. Here then, in general, is the progress of this relaxation of manners.

As soon as Constantine declared himself in favour of Christianity, people became Converts in crouds; and, they saw fulfilled to the letter, what the Prophet had foretold of the Church, that it should be raised like the highest mountain of the whole world, that the nations should run to it from all parts, and come to it to learn the law of God, and the rules of their conduct of life.† On one hand were seen the clearest miracles every day performed at the tombs of the Martyrs; the sanctity of the manners of the greatest

* Hesych. Ep. ad Aug. 191. n. 6.

† H. 11. 3.

part of the Christians, and the invincible force of that Religion, which such cruel persecutions, for three hundred years, had only served to strengthen more and more. Besides, Idolatry and the fabulous Theology of the Poets, had been so much cried down for a long time, by the Philosophers, that the greatest part of people of sense believed it no longer, and kept up the Religion of the common people only through policy. They easily therefore abandoned it, when they found it no longer supported by public authority. Many became Christians: Others remained void of all Religion through licentiousness of mind or manners; either because they could not bring their understanding to submit to the simplicity of faith, or would not leave off their debaucheries, or restore their ill-gotten goods or through hopes of making their fortune by bad ways.

There scarce remained any but two sorts of real Heathens. The low class of the people, illiterate and ignorant, who are governed only by custom, and struck only with sensible objects: And certain men, fond of singularity, who, by pitiful refinements were resolved to support Idolatry, on the allegorical interpretations which some Philosophers gave the fables, from a blind-respect for antiquity. These were the Platonicians of that time, men far from having the good sense of Plato, and the ancient Academicians, his disciples. Taking whatever was weakest in his doctrine, and blending it with that of Pythagoras, and

the mysteries of the Egyptians, they had composed a kind of Religion, the groundwork of which was Magic; and who, under the pretence of worshipping good or evil spirits, authorised every sort of superstition.* Such was the Religion of Julian the Apostate; and we see the doctrinal points in the writings of Apuleius, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Jamblicus. But few people understood these subtleties; and Heathenism was more and more cried down every day.

In so great a croud of new Christians, it was scarce possible but that some should creep in, drawn thereto by divers temporal motives; such as the desire of gaining promotion under the Christian Princes, complaisance to their relations and friends, fear of their masters: In a word, from all the motives which now-a-days make false devotees. But most of these contented themselves with becoming Catechumens; and, not being able to submit to the severity of the Christian morality, they put off their baptism the longest they could, and very often to the point of death, that they might enjoy the unhappy liberty of sinning, without being subjected to penance.† Others procured themselves to be baptized, without being true Converts.‡ A curiosity to know the mysteries, which were discovered only to the Faithful, drew over some light and inconsiderate people; superstition made others

* Aug. Civ. 8. c. 11, 12, 11, &c. † Aug. in Jo. VI. 26. Tr. 2. ‡ V. Aug. de Cat. 2. c. 17.

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wish to be initiated in all sorts of mysteries, and to partake of whatever bore the name of sacred, without distinguishing the true God and the true Religion from others. Whatever care the Pastors of the Church took to examine the Competents, it was impossible, as they were only men, that they should not be sometimes deceived.

Even many of those who were truly Christians, grew daily more and more remiss in their duties. The fear of Martyrdom being removed, death appeared no longer so near at hand, and peace and ease produced another sort of danger, in causing watchfulness to be lost. In the times of the persecutions, during the intervals thereof, a notable abatement was perceived in the fervour of the Christians. The Fathers complained loudly of it, and attributed the hottest persecutions to this decay of zeal. There were always tares mixed with the good corn; that is, there were Christians, who, as Origen says, came to the Church, bowed down to the Priests, gave offerings for the Embellishment of the Altar, but without correcting their morals or abandoning their vices.*

What was it then, in the time of settled peace, when a man was a Christian, not only without danger, but with honour? As the Princes and Magistrates, though become Christians, did not lead a less Christian life

* Leo. serm. 6. in Epiph. c. 3.—Cyp. de Laps.—Dion. Alex. ap Euf. 8. hist. c. 2.—Hom. in Numb. i. in Jos.—Chrys. hom. 24. in Act.

while they kept their fortunes, and discharged their different functions; the generality of the Faithful began no longer to fear honours, riches, and the conveniences of life. Thus the love of sensual pleasures, avarice, and ambition were again awakened. The world, become Christian, was nevertheless the world. A distinction then began to be made between Christians and Saints and devout people. St Chrysostome often complains, that his hearers said, to excuse their interested conduct, and their attachment to earthly things: "We are not Monks, we have wives, we have children, we have families to maintain." As if those Christians of Rome, or of Corinth, whom St Paul exhorted to so high a degree of perfection, and whom he called *Saints*, were not also married people, and leading outwardly, a common way of life.

The corruption of nature poisons every thing. Whatever pleased the senses in the public service of the Church, and the Ecclesiastical Ministry, was abused. The rejoicings on the Sundays and other great Festivals, exceeded, sometimes, the bounds of sobriety and Christian modesty.* It was necessary, as early as the fourth century, as I have observed above, to abolish the entertainments made on the feasts of the Martyrs; and the Clergy were forbidden to be present at those made on occasion of nuptials. Origen†

* Greg. Naz. Or. 6.—Bas. Or. de Ebriet.—Aug. Ep. 29.

† In Cels.

had well observed the difficulty there is to reconcile sensible pleasure with spiritual joy. The body is a slave that turns insolent, as soon as we endeavour to content it with food, sleep, and other conveniences. It leaves the mind no longer at liberty to apply to heavenly things, nor strength to resist temptations: Nor can the mind continue master of the flesh, but by a severe conduct, and constant application. I here speak of those same times, which I have been describing in the Third Part of this work; and I take notice of the smallest defects, to point out the first beginnings of remissness, without designing, in the least, to weaken what I have said concerning the general manners of the Church and of her discipline, which was still in its greatest vigour. Above all, holiness of life was general among the Clergy.

It must however be owned, that there were some Prelates too visibly affected by the honours paid them; and that some of them were accused of making a wrong use of the great riches they had at their disposal. The complaints carried before the Council of Chalcedon against Dioscorus and Ibas may be seen.* The characters of Eusebius of Nicomedia, and the heads of the Arians, particularly of George, the Usurper of the See of Alexandria, are well known. There will scarce be found any of the Orthodox Bishops, on whom these reproaches could be cast with any grounds. But as the here-

* Act. iii. & x.

tics had likewise their Bishops and their Priests, the violence of their behaviour diminished the respect for the Priesthood.

It was a great scandal to the Heathens, and to the uninstructed Christians, to see men, who bore such venerable titles, animated against other Bishops and Priests; abuse and calumniate one another in their discourses and writings; come to Court to solicit the favour of the Princes in order to support their party: For the heretics omitted nothing of all this. Monks were seen, who, transported by a false zeal, quitted their deserts, came to the towns, excited seditions, and committed unheard of violences. These disorders reigned chiefly in the East, where the minds of men being warmer and more determined, the passions, when once kindled, are carried to the greatest extremities. In the mean time, the respect for persons consecrated to Religion, lessened, and consequently that for Religion itself.

The apparent virtues of the Heathens were another snare for the weak. For some of them led moral lives, kept their word, were just in their dealings, detested fraud and avarice; in a word, observed the laws and rules of civil society; pretending it was enough for a man to live according to reason, without troubling his head concerning the disputes which divided the Christians: As if the Christians themselves did not profess to follow sovereign reason, the Word in-

car-

carnate.* These wise ones of the world, never considering the prophecies, the miracles, or the other sensible proofs of the Mission of JESUS-CHRIST, took Faith for a weakness and prejudice of mind; and treated, as superstitious practices, the mortification of the body, rigours, chastity, withdrawing from the diversions of the theatre, and other profane amusements.

Now, although Christianity was the Religion of the Prince, the number of Heathens was still so great, that they could not be hindered from speaking, or even writing and dogmatizing in public.† This was a remainder of the ancient liberty of the Philosophers, of which the heretics also knew well how to make an advantage. All that the Emperors could do in these early times, was to shut up the Temples, and to prevent sacrifices and other public ceremonies of Idolatrous Worship.‡ And the Heathens often murmured on this account.¶ The attempts made by the Senate, and Valentinian the Younger, to restore the altar of Victory, are well known.§ They sometimes proceeded to acts of violence against the Christians, who publicly opposed their superstitions; and hence are still found some Martyrs, even under the most Christian Emperors.¶ The Emperors themselves retained

* Aug. in Jo. tr. 45. † Aug. contr. Advers. leg. & Proph. ‡ Cod. de Pag. ¶ Euf. 3. Vit. c. 34, 35, &c. —Soc. I. c. 18. Soz. 2, c. 5. § Ambr. ad Valent. de relat. sym. Ep. 31. ¶ Mart. I. Jan. 17. Mart. 14. Aug.

certain formalities taken from Heathenism, which, in the main, were nothing but vain titles, as the name of *Divinity*, which was continued to be given them; and the epithets of *Divine* and *Sacred* to whatever appertained to them, their house, their treasure, their domain, their letters, their purple.* This language had gained such an establishment, that the most holy among the Bishops made no scruple of using it.

§ LVL.—Corruption of the Romans.

IN the mean time, the common people among the Heathens became more and more corrupted every day. All the vices, which I have pointed out as reigning, when the Gospel appeared, still continued: And, except a few free-thinkers and Philosophers, whom I have just mentioned, there was nothing good remained among the Greeks and Romans, that could serve as a counterpoise thereto. And, indeed, it was at this time that the Empire fell in the West; and it supported itself in the East, only until it was violently attacked. There were no longer discipline among the troops, or authority in the Commanders, steady councils, or knowledge of business, or vigour in the young people, or prudence in the old, or love of the country and the public. Every one pur-

* Numen, Domus divina. Sacrum ærarium. Patrimonium sacrum.

fued his pleasure and his private interest; nothing but deceit and treachery were to be found. The Romans, softened by luxury and idleness, defended themselves against the Barbarians only by other Barbarians whom they took into pay.* They were sunk in luxury and effeminacy, and piqued themselves on a false delicacy, which had nothing solid to support it. In a word, the measure of their crimes and abominations being filled up, God executed on them that exemplary justice, which he had foretold by St John.† Rome was several times taken and pillaged by the Barbarians; the blood of so many Martyrs, with which she had made herself drunk, was avenged; and the Empire of the West remained a prey to the people of the North, who founded new kingdoms therein. Such were the true causes of the fall of the Roman Empire, not the establishment of the Christian Religion, as the Heathens then said; and as Machiavel and other impious and ignorant politicians have dared to say lately.

The Christians living in the midst of a nation so wicked and so deeply corrupted, I mean these latter Romans, it was difficult for their virtue not to suffer some decay; chiefly, as they were no longer divided from the Heathens, as in the times of the persecutions; and having now to guard themselves only against their friendship and their ca-

* Amm. Marc. l. 14; c. 28.

† Apoc. xiii. 18.

resses.

resses.* We must not be surprized at the vices with which the Fathers reproach the Christians, as early as the fourth century. St Augustine made no difficulty of remarking this to the Heathens who desired to be converted, to the end that they might not be surprized at it, and consequently less scandalized. "You will see," says he, "in the crouds of those who fill our material Temples, drunkards, avaricious people, cheats, gamesters, debauchees, people fond of the public shews, others who apply sacrilegious remedies, use charms, study astrology, and conjurers of all sorts; and all these pass nevertheless for Christians."† He sincerely owns to the Manicheans, that there were people of a superstitious turn, even in the true Religion, or so far given up to their passions, that they forgot what they had promised to God.‡ He often again speaks on this subject in the works he wrote against the Donatists, where he proves so well, that the tares are to remain with the good grain in the Church, until the time of the harvest, that is, to the day of Judgment. He condemns also the injustice of those, who praised or blamed in general all Christians, or all Monks, according to the good or bad which they saw in some individuals.¶ We may find similar proofs of a relaxation of manners among Christians in St Chrysostome and the other Fathers of these times. §

* Salv. de Gubern. Dei. lib. 6, & 7. † Aug. de Catech. Rud. 5, 7, 17, 25. ‡ Aug. de Mor. Eccl. c. 34. ¶ In Pf. 99. c. 12, &c. § V. Chrys. in Matt. hom. 61. De Comp. & ad Fidel. Patrem.

To what purpose then, may it be said, did public penances and excommunications serve? To purge the Church of a great many vices, but not of all.* To have penance imposed, the sinner must ask for it, or at least he must submit to it. He must therefore either confess his sin himself, by accusing himself, or he must own it, when accused of it by others. Excommunication was only for those who would not accept of penance, though convicted, either by their own confession, by juridical proofs, or public notoriety.† Besides, these prudent and charitable Bishops, were never in hurry to come to this last extremity. They never excommunicated sinners, when they saw either their power or their number so great, that there were less hopes of correcting them, than danger of exasperating them, and causing them to make a schism. Towards the multitude, they used only instructions and admonitions, and used severity only against individuals. But before this, they often admonished the convicted and impenitent sinner of the dreadful danger he was in; they exhorted him to quit his dangerous state, sparing not threats to overcome his obstinacy:‡ They sighed for him before God, and set the whole Church to prayer: They hoped and expected for a long time, imitating the patience and forbearance of the Father of mercies.¶ In a

* Aug. Ench. c. 80. † Orig. Tr. 35. in Matt. hom. 2. in Jgs. ‡ Aug. contr. Parm. Ep. 21, & 64.
¶ Comt. Ap. 2. c. 41.

word, they never proceeded to this sorrowful remedy, till they had exhausted every contrivance of charity; and then they applied it with the grief of a Father, who, to save the life of his son, should find himself obliged to cut off one of his arms with his own hand. One may see on this subject, the Discourse of St Chrysostome on an Anathema.*

As to those whose crimes remained secret, either because they were known only to God, or it was impossible to convict them of them, there was no remedy for it. They neither could be forbidden the entrance of the Church, or even to partake of the sacraments, if they were impious enough not to dread a sacrilege. The persecutions were certain trials to distinguish the chaff from the good corn; But when they were over, hypocrisy might continue unto death. In the mean time, these weak and corrupted Christians did great harm to the Church by their evil discourse and bad example, especially in their own families. They instructed badly their children, whom nevertheless they got baptized; and the want of domestic instruction was of great consequence in these first ages, where we do not find any public catechistical instructions for baptized children.

* Ed. Angl. T. 6. p. 439.

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§ LVII.—*Incurſions of the Barbarians, and their Manners.*

THE ravages of the Barbarians, who deſtroyed the Roman Empire, were not leſs pernicious to the manners of the Church, than the general behaviour of the latter Romans. The Goſpel, which is ſovereign Reaſon itſelf, rejects equally every vice which is contrary to it. Neither the ſtupid, nor the knaviſh, nor the brutiſh, nor the lazy, can be Chriſtians: ferocity of manners and cruelty of diſpoſition are as incompatible with true Religion, as ſoftneſs and luxury. Wars and acts of hoſtility are contrary to piety, as well as to juſtice, and all rule. The Church therefore ſuffered infinite evils in the frightful diſorders cauſed by the ſavage nations of the North, who deluged, at the ſame time, the whole Empire. St Jerome* and the other Fathers who lived in thoſe times, have left us a lamentable deſcription of them. The preſſing intereſt of preſerving one's life or fortune, in a city taken by ſtorm, or in a country expoſed to pillage; of eſcaping ſlavery; of ſaving the honour of the women: theſe extremities are violent temptations to neglect ſpiritual concerns: and an heroic virtue is requiſite to ſupport one's ſelf in the miſt of carnage, and all the horrors of a brutal victory. We have letters

* In Pf. v. in fine. & al. Id. Ep. de f. i.—Nepot. & ad Gerentiam, & ad Ageruchiam.

of St Basil, and some, still more ancient, of St Gregory Thaumaturgus, imposing penances on those, whom the incursions of the Barbarians into Cappadocia, had made fall into different crimes.

When the Vandals laid waste Africa, what afflicted St Augustine the most, according to the relation of Possidius, * was the danger and loss of souls by it. "He saw," adds this Author, "the Churches destitute of Priests
 " and ministers; the sacred Virgins and o-
 " ther religious persons dispersed every
 " where. Some had yielded to torments, o-
 " thers had died by the sword; others were
 " carried into captivity; where having lost the
 " integrity of body, mind, and Faith, they
 " served hard-hearted and brutish enemies.
 " He saw that the hymns and praises of God
 " had ceased in the Churches, whose very
 " buildings, in many places, were destroyed:
 " That the sacrifices and sacraments were no
 " longer sought, and that it was difficult to
 " find out any one, who could administer them
 " to those who sought them: That the Bi-
 " shops and the Clergy, to whom God had
 " shewn the mercy not to fall into the hands
 " of the enemies, or to escape afterwards,
 " were stript of every thing, and reduced to
 " the utmost beggary, without a possibility
 " of giving all of them what was necessary for
 " them." From this instance we may judge
 of what happened in the other large Pro-
 vinces, such as Spain, Gaul, and Illyricum.

* Vit, Aug.

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What means were there in the midst of these disorders to instruct the people, to train up Priests and Teachers? How could the Bishops visit their flocks, or meet in council to fill up the vacant Sees, and maintain discipline? * St Gregory concludes thus his explications on Ezechiel: "Let no one take it ill, that I leave off speaking. Our calamities are increased to the degree you all see; swords surround us; death threatens us on every side. Some return to us with their hands cut off; we hear of some made slaves, of others killed. When a person cannot live, how can he speak of the mystical sense of the Scripture?" The Church therefore has good reason to beg of God, in all her prayers, the public peace and tranquillity, as a rampart necessary for all religious exercises.

The Barbarians, it is true, became Converts: The Franks turned Christians: the Goths and Vandals, of Arians, became Catholics: but they continued Barbarians for a long time. I here call *Barbarism* that disposition of mind, which makes men govern themselves not by reason, but by passion and custom. We have remarkable instances of the force of custom alone in the Iroquois and other people of America, whom we call *Savages*. We scarce know any part of mankind who have less passion for women, or are less subject to anger. They are extremely patient: they are just and grateful: they give

* V. Conc. Bracar. 3. An, 411.

with pleasure: they practise hospitality: nevertheless it has hitherto been very difficult to make Christians of any of them, except a few, who have been civilized in their infancy, and brought up among the French. It is not that they want understanding and reason in those things in which they have been brought up: But they are incapable of receiving any new ideas. They have no notion of a God, Creator of all things, equally master over all nations; of the necessity of one only Religion in all countries; of the hopes of a life to come, in which only spiritual good things are promised, and much less of the more sublime mysteries of Religion. They hear quietly what is said to them, and agree to every thing; but when you have done talking, you will find that you have convinced them of nothing. If any of them desire baptism, it is commonly from a motive of present interest, and often to obtain the merest trifle they wish for. As soon as they have got it, they no longer remember what they promised: they go back to their own people, and begin again to eat human flesh, and to make their enemies die in tortures. There are others who are quite stupid, such as the Negroes and the Cafres, in whom no sentiments of religion are found, nor any capacity of mind for any thing that is not an object of the sight or touch. You must first make men of all such as these, before you can make them Christians.

I do not pretend to say that the Franks and the nations who conquered the Romans, were at that time still in this condition: But it is certain that they were unacquainted with letters: that they lived only by hunting, without applying themselves to the Arts or Agriculture: that they were accustomed to plunder and bloodshed, and that their very figure alone inspired dread in the Romans. We see in their conduct the principal characteristics of Barbarians, lightness and inconstancy. For it is not acting like a man, to abandon one's self to different passions according as different objects present themselves. It must be owned that we see great irregularity, and even contradiction, in the lives of our first Christian Kings. Clovis and his children shew on one hand a great respect and zeal for religion, but on the other hand, they are guilty of injustice and cruelty. Good King Gontram, whom the Church has ranked in the number of its Saints,* among an infinite number of actions of piety, committed great faults; and Dagobert, that illustrious Founder of Monasteries, was a very vicious man. Not but that there were still Bishops of Apostolic sanctity and vigour: But they chose the lesser evil, and liked better to have Christian Princes, though weak and imperfect, than Heathens to persecute the Church. One sign that they did not easily trust the converted Barbarians, is that, for the space of two

* Mart. 2. 8. Mart.

hundred years, we scarce read of any of the Clergy who were not Romans: and this is easily seen by their names. We find in the same times, grievous complaints of the too great facility of some Priests in reiterating penance;* which might arise from the fickle, inconstant temper of these Barbarians.

§ LVIII.—*Mixture of the Romans and Barbarians.*

THE two nations, I mean the Romans and the Barbarians were insensibly blended together. But, as in the mixing of two colours, each loses something of its strength, and there arises a third which destroys them both; so were the manners of the Barbarians softened, and their minds improved by their intercourse with the Romans; but the Romans also became more ignorant and less polished, so that, as early as the sixth century, one may observe a great change in the manners of the West. Some Councils† had forbidden the Bishops to read the books of the Heathens; and St Gregory‡ severely reprimanded Desiderius, Bishop of Vienne, for teaching grammar. Thus the Historians, the Poets, and other profane Authors were little read, that they might confine themselves solely to what directly concerned religion, to

* Conc. Tol. iii. an. 589. c. 12.—V. Greg. Pax. ad Mon. 31. Iſid. ſent.

† Conc. Carth. iv. c. 16.

‡ Ep. 9.

which

which however these foreign studies are not useless, in order to preserve criticism and the knowledge of antiquity. For want of this assistance, supposititious works, under the illustrious names of some Ecclesiastical writers, were too easily received, and people became too credulous with regard to miracles. It was so certain that the Apostles and their Disciples had performed an infinite number, and that there were every day some performed at the tombs of the Martyrs, that people did not any longer examine into them. Those histories which contained the greatest number, and the most extraordinary ones, were the most pleasing. The want of knowing natural Philosophy made all sorts of prodigies be considered as supernatural tokens of the wrath of God. Credit was given to Astrology; eclipses and comets were dreaded.*

But what was wanting on the side of learning and politeness, was advantageously compensated by piety and other solid virtues. The whole of the Discipline which I have described in the Third Part of this Treatise, subsisted until the tenth century.† Never were the Christians, I speak of Princes and Kings, more assiduous in the singing of Psalms, and all the exercises of Religion: Never were they more exact in keeping the fast-days and solemnizing the Festivals. Nothing is more famous than the Chapel of

* Vita. Lud. Pii. † V. Thomass. Discrip. P. 2. lib. I. c. 16. & P. 3. lib. I. c. 20.

Charlemain. As he was always travelling, he caused Relics to be carried in his retinue, and ornaments, and whatever was necessary for the Divine Service, with a numerous and well-chosen Clergy. His Chapel was served with all the magnificence of any Cathedral whatever. His example was followed by the Princes his successors; and the great Lords, who raised themselves on the ruins of that family, imitated the Princes in this, as well as in every thing else. During the whole of these times, we see Prelates who led the most spotless lives, applied assiduously to prayer, and had great zeal for the conversion of souls: Witness those who planted the Faith in Belgic Gaul, in Germany, and the other countries more remote towards the North. The authority of these Bishops daily went on increasing. Besides the dignity of the Priesthood, and their sanctity of life, their experience in business, and their affection for their people, rendered them recommendable. During the conquests of the Barbarians, they often checked the fury of the Victors, and saved their cities from plunder, even at the hazard of their lives. Thus Attila was prevailed on to turn from Rome by Pope St. Leo; from Troyes by St. Lupus; from Orleans by St. Aignan: But St. Desiderius of Langres, and St. Nicasius of Rheims were murdered for their flock by the Vandals.* When the Barbarian Kings were become Christians,

* Mart. 25. Maii. 14. Dec.

the Bishops took a seat in their Councils, and became their most Faithful Ministers. They inspired them as far as possible with sentiments of mildness and clemency, often interceded for criminals, and made use of various means to save their lives. It was for this purpose that they so carefully maintained the right of Asylums, which the respect for the Martyrs, and the most illustrious among the other Saints, had procured to their tombs, as in France to that of St Martin. From hence probably came the custom of putting out the eyes of such as deserved death: They were thus disabled from doing harm, and had time nevertheless to do penance; and they were often shut up in Monasteries.

The Bishops also employed the credit they had with the Princes, to prevent acts of injustice and oppression; to procure ease and comfort to the poor, and the emolument of the public. They readily employed the riches of the Churches for these purposes. Let any one read what the Popes (from St Gregory to the time of Charlemain) did to repair the ruins of Rome, and to rebuild not only the Churches and Hospitals, but the Streets and Aqueducts; or to secure all Italy against the fury of the Lombards and the avarice of the Greeks. Let any one read the lives of St Arnoul, St Eligius, St Ouen, and of St Leodegarius, and of the other Prelates who took a share in the public management of affairs in these times; It will be seen that
Christi-

Christianity, so far from being prejudicial to Policy, is the most solid foundation of it, since charity is the best means of uniting mankind, of making them live in peace and plenty together, which is the end of all true policy. It is true that Christians are not so fit to become Conquerors, as the greatest part of conquests are nothing but illustrious robberies.

The great credit of the Bishops and Abbots, being insensibly blended with temporal power, they became Lords, with the same privileges as the Laity, but, at the same time, with the same burdens of furnishing soldiers for the service of the state; and often that of leading them out in person. The two nations were by this time sufficiently blended, so as to make the Clergy indifferently of the Barbarians and the Romans; but it was very difficult to change entirely their manners, and to hinder them from becoming hunters and warriors, even after their Ordination, especially when the orders of the Prince obliged them to bear arms. In a word, it must be owned, that these temporal Lordships, attached to Ecclesiastical dignities, were one great source of the relaxation of Discipline.

§ LIX.—*Manners of the Christians of the East.*

IN the East there never were any of these Lordships: but other causes produced other evils. The great heresies which had been broached there, and the length they had run, had agitated much the minds of men, and shaken in many the ground-works of Faith. Nestorius on one hand, and Eutyches, or rather Dioscorus, had an infinite number of followers. The disputes were perpetual; and often ended in quarrels and seditions. The Clergy and the Monks, as being the most zealous, were the warmest: And when these latter went so far as to abandon their solitudes, to come to the towns, to maintain what they thought to be the cause of God, there were no acts of violence of which they were not capable. The tragic scenes the enemies of the Council of Chalcedon exhibited in Egypt and Syria, are well known.

The Emperors, desirous of stopping those evils by their civil authority, caused one still greater. For instead of applying themselves only to the seeing that the decisions of the Church were executed, by chastising, and repressing by force, the seditious and rebellious, they undertook to judge of the Dogma, or point of Faith, and published Edicts to appease the disputes by dangerous temperaments and modifications. Afterwards, supported by the base complaisance of the Bishops, they undertook to regulate Ecclesiastical

astical Discipline, that is, they ruined it, for then there was no other rule but to please them.

Although the Empire still subsisted, it was no longer made up of Romans, but by name, nor of Greeks, but by language. It was a medley of all sorts of Barbarians, of Thracians, Illyrians, Isaurians, Armenians, Persians, Scythians, Sarmathians, Bulgarians, and Russians. And, in fact, in the whole history of the world, we scarce know a nation more corrupted than these latter Greeks. They had the vices of the ancients, but they had neither their politeness, nor their sciences, nor their arts. In the mean time, they were all Christians, and have preserved, even to this day, with the greatest care, the whole exterior of Religion.

They could not prevent themselves from having a great intercourse with the Mahometans, ever since these latter had made themselves masters of the East. Numbers of the Greeks were subjects to them in Egypt and Syria, and continued nevertheless Christians. For the conquests of the Mussulmans (which was the name the followers of Mahomet gave themselves) established their false Religion, without abolishing the exercise of the Christian Religion in the countries where they found it. His doctrine was too absurd to be admitted by people enlightened with the true Religion; as he pretended that people should believe him to be the Envoy of God on his bare word, with-

without having been promised by any Prophecy; without performing any single miracle; and even without using their reason. He found followers, because he addressed himself to Arabians as ignorant as himself; his arms were successful, and he honestly divided the booty among his followers. The Christians abhorred them, and they were a long time subject to the Mussulmans, before they could become familiarized with them.

At last they grew accustomed to their manners; and after two hundred years, the Empire of the Mussulmans being in its greatest force under the Abasides Caliphs, even their religion began to appear less odious to the Christians, now become ignorant and weak in consequence of so long a slavery. The origin of Mahometanism was now sufficiently ancient to be obscured and embellished with a multitude of fables; and the pompous fustian of the Alcoran, where the name of God echoed on every side, might impose on ignorant people. It every where preaches up the Unity of God; and an abhorrence of idolatry: It sounds aloud Judgment, Hell, and Heaven: It speaks with respect of Moses, the Prophets, the Apostles, and Martyrs: It bestows even great praises on JESUS-CHRIST.

The Mussulmans moreover have copied several of the exterior practices of Christianity: The Christians prayed seven times a day; the Mussulmans pray five. The Christians

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have a Lent of forty days; the Mussulmans have one of twenty-nine days; when they eat nothing till night, as the Christians at that time did. The Christians keep holy the Sunday; the Mussulmans the Friday. We meet in the Churches to pray, and to hear the holy Scripture read, and the Instructions of the Priests; they pray also, after their way, in the Mosques: They there read the Alcoran, and hear the sermons of their Teachers. They perform Pilgrimages to the Land they esteem Holy, and to the tombs of their pretended Martyrs. They give large alms, and have founded a great number of Hospitals. They have a sort of Monks, who live in community, and torment the body in a frightful manner: For there is no exterior austerity, which people without virtue may not imitate, either through vanity or a motive of interest. But they will never bring themselves to live in silence and labour without being seen by any one;—to do so a man must be a Christian.

Our Travellers, brought up in the bosom of Christianity, are often struck with this outward appearance of religion, and those human virtues, which they see among the Infidels. They return home sometimes staggered, and inclined to believe every thing, indifferently, in the point of religion. How great must have been the temptation to those poor Christians born under their power, and obliged to spend their whole lives under it; almost ever in oppression, and saw their fortune

tune insured to them, if they would abandon the faith of their forefathers? It is surprising that they were not all perverted; and the great number who still remain all over the Levant, after more than a thousand years, is a shining proof of the force of the Gospel, and the weakness of Mahometanism.

The Christians who continued subjects of the Emperors of Constantinople, may also have felt some effects of their intercourse with the Mahometans, and the different heretics, with whose doctrine the East was infested. Some Jews and Saracens, that is to say, Arabian Mahometans, persuaded the Emperor Leo the Isaurian to break the holy images.* The Emperor Michael the Stammerer, was half a Jew. The young Emperor, Michael III. together with the companions of his debaucheries, mimicked, by an execrable derision, the sacred ceremonies of religion, and even those of the awful sacrifice. I see, sometime afterwards, another Emperor, Alexander, brother of Leo the Philosopher, openly blaspheme against Christianity, and wish for the restoration of Idolatry.† This makes me suspect that the Greeks were the first authors of that spirit of free-thinking and libertinism, which passed over into Italy. But I mean only to make this suspicion fall on some of the great ones, and a few individuals. For, in other respects, Religion, during this whole time, maintained itself, in a magnificent manner,

* Theoph. Cedr.

† Id. ap. Baron. an. 912.

all over the Greek Empire. ~ There were great Doctors, great Bishops, illustrious Solitaries, and even several Martyrs in defence of the holy images.

§ LX.——*Manners of the West.—Disorders of the tenth Century.*

IN the West the Faith was preserved entire: No one took it into his head to doubt of Religion. There were no heretics; but ignorance and barbarism kept on increasing. Charlemain had laboured, with all his might, to restore learning and Ecclesiastical Discipline: but the following Kings did not pursue his great designs: and both the Church and state relapsed into greater disorders than any that had been before. The Faith had been planted in Saxony, Bavaria, and all the rest of Germany. But to strengthen it among these unconquerable nations, Charlemain had been obliged to maintain the preaching of it by the sword, and punishments. There were therefore many forced conversions at first, which, by the misfortunes of the times, could not be followed with all that care that was necessary to make religion take solid root in those countries just newly cleared of idolatry. It may therefore be believed, that there remained among them a great fund of ignorance and insensibility with regard to things spiritual; and this perhaps might be one of the causes why schism

schism and heresies were so easily introduced all over the North. The civil wars which continued from the reign of Lewis the Debonnaire, brought back ignorance and disorder even into the soundest parts of the French Empire; and, to complete the misfortune, the Normans, as yet Heathens, pillaged it, and laid it waste on all sides. The Hungarians, who were also Heathens, over-ran Italy; the Saracens made themselves, for a long while, feared on its coasts, and at last seized on Calabria and Sicily, besides Spain, of which they had been masters above a century. And thus, whatever remained of the manners and politeness of the Romans, was now completely done away.

The loss of the arts, of literature, and politeness, would have been but of small consideration, if religion had not been interested therein. But it cannot naturally subsist without study and instructions, which preserve both doctrine and morals. It is necessary that the holy Scripture should be read, taught, and explained to the people. The Apostolical Traditions must be carefully preserved, and purged, from time to time, of whatever men add thereto without lawful authority. All this was difficult to do in the miserable times we are speaking of. Most of the Laity had no books, nor could they read; and if the great Lords had any ancient books among their jewels, they could not understand them, because they were wrote in Latin. This language was no lon-

ger talked, and French was not as yet written, any more than the other vulgar languages, which were only beginning then to be formed. The service of the Church was performed in Latin, as were read also the public Lessons of the Scripture; though seldom explained.

The great Lords, each cantoned in his own castle, on account of the little wars they had perpetually one with another, could not often come to the Episcopal city; particularly if they chanced to be at war with the Bishop himself. They were therefore obliged to content themselves with the private Masses of their Chaplains, or the service in the neighbouring Monasteries. But the institution of the Monks was not to teach; and they had no authority to correct. As early as the ninth century, the Bishops often complained that the Churches were abandoned by the rich and the great; and pressed them to come to them, at least on solemn Festivals.* Now, there were still, at that time, four days in the year, in which all Christians were obliged to receive the Communion, viz. on Christmas-day, Maundy-Thursdai, Easter, and Whitsuntide.†

The common people were no better instructed than the nobles, except the inhabitants of some towns, which had good Bishops. But most of them preached so seldom, that we meet with canons which re-

* Conc. Ticin. an. 855. c. 4.—Ageb. de priv. sacerdot. Theodulph. c. 43, 46. † Hom. Leon. P. P. IV.

commend to them to teach the people, in the vulgar tongue, at least the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, that is to say, the elements of Religion, or, as we should now say, the Catechism*. In the midst of such thick darkness, how could we believe how far ignorance and credulity went, unless we still saw the marks of them in the oldest Legends? For it is to these times, that is, from the ninth century, that we must refer most of the false acts of the Martyrs and other Saints, invented by a mistaken piety, to entertain the people on their holidays. From hence it comes, that the lives of the most illustrious Saints are commonly those that are the most adulterated. It was about this time that the false Decretals of Isidore were fabricated, which have so much contributed to the change of the ancient discipline.

The Priests and Clergy were scarce able to get instructions themselves. They were obliged to use self-defence, sword in hand, against universal hostilities, to preserve the possessions of the Church, on which they subsisted. Several, driven to it by poverty, were forced to take to sordid trades, or to travel from province to province, to find meat in some Bishop's or Lord's service. What studies could they apply to, or what regularity of manners could they observe? There were only a few Cathedral Churches and Monasteries, in which were preserved the tradition

* Coc. Troslei, c. 15.

of Studies, and the most exact practices of a Christian life. And even the Monks and Canons had relaxed very much from their primitive institution. This is seen by the excellent Regulations made by Lewis the Debonnaire, to restore their discipline.* But the disorders ensuing, made them fall into a still more deplorable situation. Most of the Monasteries were pillaged, burnt, and destroyed by the Normans: the Monks and Canons massacred or dispersed, and obliged to live among Seculars.

One may easily judge how far the poor must have been abandoned in the midst of these public calamities. How could they be assisted by the Clergy, who had so much difficulty to live themselves? And where could alms be got, in times, when famines were so dreadful, that people eat human flesh? For trade was not open to supply the wants of one country by the abundance of another. Scarce had the Churches any sacred Vessels, and it is in these times we see the use of chalices of glass, horn, wood, or brass, forbidden, and leave given to use pewter ones.† Not but that there were still large patrimonies belonging to the Churches; but these were a continual temptation to the Princes and great Lords, who were always armed. The Episcopal Sees were often usurped by men entirely unworthy, who seized on them by

* Conc. Aquisgran. an. 817. Conc. Troslei. Praef.

† Glaber 3. c. 9. & 4. c. 3.—Conc. Caleyth. an. 787. c. 18.—De Conf. dist. 1. c. 45.

violence. Very often some neighbouring Lord would settle in a Bishopric, sword in hand, a son under age, that he might plunder the Church in his name. Thus was Hugh, son of Herbert Count of Vermandois, intruded into the See of Rheims, when only five years old. Rome itself was exposed to these disorders. The little Tyrants, all around, were there the strongest; and, during this tenth century, there were nothing but intrusions and violent expulsions in this first See, wherein, until that time, discipline had been preserved in the greatest purity.

Councils became very rare, on account of the difficulty there was in assembling them in the midst of universal hostilities; for they were such as rendered it unsafe to go from town to town. The misfortunes therefore of the Church were not only great, but the remedies were also difficult. The memory of ancient examples, and ancient rules, was blotted out and lost by degrees. By seeing crimes go unpunished, people grew accustomed to them, and hardened in them: The malady was not of an ordinary sort, it was an insensibility and a spiritual lethargy. Every body was a Christian, so that it seemed as if they were naturally so, and that a Christian and a man were one and the same thing. There was now no distinction; Christianity had become a part of manners, and scarce now consisted of any thing, but a few exterior formalities. The Christians differed little from the Jews and Heathens, with

with regard to vices and virtues; but only in respect to ceremonies of religion, which never make men better.

§ LXI.—*Preservation of Religion.*

IF the Christian Religion had not been the work of God, it never could have withstood such violent attacks; but he has clearly shewn that he is in the midst of his Church, and that no human revolution is capable of shaking it.* On the contrary, the force of the Gospel shone forth most wonderfully in these unhappy times. Whatever ignorance reigned, every body, to the poorest woman, knew and adored one only God, Creator of the universe, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and JESUS-CHRIST, that only begotten Son of God, the Saviour of all men. Every body believed a future judgment, and a life to come. All the grand principles of Morality were certain and known to every body; whereas in the most flourishing state of ancient Greece, the Philosophers never ceased disputing about them.

It is true, they were but badly followed; and, though no one disputed the truth of them, few drew the necessary consequences from them, to conform thereto their lives. The Christian morality however failed not to produce great effects even in bad Christians. It prevented many evils; it rendered

the most barbarous people less cruel, more tractable, and milder. If they did not avoid crimes, they at least repented of them, and did penance for them; they at least condemned themselves for them. In a word, the profession of Christianity has spread in the public a certain tincture of humanity, modesty, and decency, which are seldom found elsewhere.

The Tradition of doctrine and manners was preserved in these times, when the face of the Church appeared so generally disfigured. There were great Doctors and great Saints of every rank, and in every part of the West. In France, Monastic discipline began to raise its head, by the foundation of the famous Monastery of Cluny, of which the first Abbots, such as St Odo and St Majolus, are celebrated for their piety and doctrine. In Italy, St Romualdus founded the Monastery of Camaldoli and many others, and trained up several illustrious Disciples. We see at the same time several zealous Bishops, a St Dunstan in England, a St Ulmaric in Germany, and St Adalbert in Bohemia, Apostle of the Sclavians and Martyr. We see St Boniface likewise a Martyr in Russia, St Bruno in Prussia, St Gerard, a noble Venetian, Bishop and Martyr in Hungary, and many others, who by their instructions, their virtues, and their miracles, maintained the Tradition of sound doctrine, and Ecclesiastical discipline. In this same age, we see several Saints among the Laity,
and

and even among the greatest Lords, viz. St Geraud Count of Aurillac, St Stephen King of Hungary, St Emeric his son, the Emperor St Henry, and King Robert.

These Saints, particularly those of the nations newly converted, such as St Henry and St Stephen, shew the dispositions which those people had to virtue, whom the Romans called *Barbarians*. They were naturally inclined to sincerity, openness of heart, to chastity, to a contempt of pleasures, and bodily conveniences: They loved justice, hospitality, and alms-deeds. When these serious, sincere, and courageous men, had once relished the Gospel, they readily embraced it with their whole heart; they sought after no subtleties to explain it away; no difficulty ever discouraged them. It is true, their conduct was not so constant and uniform as that of the ancient Greeks and Romans; but neither were they so capable of disguise and hypocrisy.

It was by the care and authority of these holy personages, that public safety began to be restored, by making all the Lords swear to the *Truce of God*. Thus it was they called a cessation of all hostilities from the Wednesday evening until Monday morning in every week: and the Clergy, the Monks, the Pilgrims and labourers were to be safe.* This truce was established in several Councils under pain of excommunication;†

* Glab. 1. 4. c. 5. lib. 5. c. 1. an. 1041. † Cap. 1. extra. de trev. & pa.

such power had Religion over the minds of people, although the foundations of civil society were almost overturned. This is also the time, when excommunication against those who struck a Clergyman was most spoken of. This was never thought on in the first ages: The respect all had for them was a sufficient security against any insult. But they were then every day exposed to the greatest acts of violence.

§ LXII.—*Restoration of Piety and Discipline.*

THE Normans had ruined a great number of Churches, and the others were suffered to go to ruin, by the false opinion of the end of the world, which was expected exactly in the year of our Lord ONE THOUSAND.* When people saw the world still continue after this fatal year, new Churches were every where begun to be built, in the most magnificent style the times would allow; and not only superior to the houses of private persons, but even to those of the greatest Lords. Large endowments were made, many of which were only restitution of tithes, and other possessions of the Church, which had been usurped during the disorders of the times. Relics were every where sought after with the greatest care, and the most valuable jewels were employed to embellish them, as we still see in the trea-

* Glab. lib. 3. c. 4.

furies of the ancient Churches. At the same time endeavours were used to re-establish the Chant and the solemnity of the divine service. It was in the eleventh century that Guy of Arezzo in Tuscany, invented the Notes and Method, which are the ground-work of all our modern Music. The pious princes I have mentioned above, countenanced all these good undertakings, both by their liberality and example. We sing to this day, some Responses composed by King Robert; and he held it an honour to perform the function of Precentor publicly in the Church.*

I do not find any age in which long Psalmody prevailed more than in this. The practice of the Carthusians, and other religious orders of these times shews this. The Monks of Cluny rendered the Office for the Dead frequent; and the Little Office of our Lady began a short time after.† Many had the devotion to recite the whole Psalter every day.‡ In proportion to the encreased length of the Service; Masses and Altars were also multiplied. Domestic Chapels were without number; every Lord would have his own within the inclosure of his castle, that he might not be deprived of the Offices and of Mass, when war would not suffer him to go from home. There was also something of vanity in this: they thought it grand to reckon Chaplains among their Domestics, and

* Helgand. Vita Robert.

† Baron. ad Martyr. I.

Nov.

‡ Petr. Dam. lib. 6. Ep. 32.

disdained the public Churches, where they were confounded with the common people. It was however impossible, that this multitude of services, celebrated in so many different places, should have that dignity in them, as only one performed by a Bishop, assisted by all his Clergy, as was done in the preceding ages. Moreover the reasons for many ceremonies, which were still continued by tradition, had been forgotten; and the ideas of ancient politeness were lost. We do not therefore find, since this time, the same care taken to build the Churches at a distance from all profane erections, or the noise of much frequented places: too much ground would have been thought lost in the towns. We see no longer any Door-keepers or inferior Clerics in the Churches, to keep cleanliness, order, and quiet. These functions have been left to Beadles, and mere lay-servants; or have been totally laid aside; so that the Ecclesiastical assemblies are become all confusion and tumult. The Lords, then the Magistrates, and the other Laics of the better sort, took their place in the Choir with the Clergy; and the respect for them being once lost, the croud of the common people, and even the women, went into the Sanctuary itself.

But, in the eleventh century, there were abuses, still of greater consequence, to reform; viz. Simony and incontinency.* Ig-

* Glab. lib. 2. c. 6. lib. 5. c. ult.—V. Petr. Dam. opusc. 6. c. 17, 18.

norance and poverty rendered the Clergy interested and insensible to the misfortunes of the Church, being totally taken up with the care of getting a subsistence. Benefices were commonly sold, even the Prelacies themselves.

A great many of the Clergy publicly kept concubines; some even attacked with impunity the law of celibacy, as an abuse, particularly in Germany, where Religion had always been the weakest. Ignorant and illiterate Clergymen considered their ministry only as a trade; and lived each by himself, applying neither to study nor prayer, but only to contrive how to live. Thus they did not comprehend the sublime motives for Celibacy; and regarded the law that supported it, as an insupportable piece of tyranny. This was the cause of their rage against Pope Gregory VII. St Peter Damian, supported by the authority of Leo IX. and the other Popes of his times, vigorously opposed these abuses. To eradicate them the better, Canon Regulars were established, who shewed the Clergy an example of living in community, and of observing canonical Discipline;* and most of the Bishops and Pastors were taken from this body of men.

* Pet. Dam. Opusc. c. 24, & 27.

§ LXIII—*Change in the Discipline of Penance.*

WITH regard to the Laity, endeavours were used to restore public penances. All still agreed that they ought to be imposed, as directed in the Canons; but the greatest sinners, for the most part, with arms in their hands, were indocile and openly rebellious: and many consented to receive penance, but according to some unauthorized canons, which notably diminished the rigour of the others.* Many became no better after receiving it. Nothing but relapses into the same crimes, and instances of a false repentance were seen.† It is true, a penance was reckoned for each crime: And thus a man, who had been guilty of thirty murders, and as many perjuries and adulteries, had a penance of several ages. And hence came afterwards those Indulgences of so many years, which are found in some Bulls.

As God requires nothing that is impossible, those who had a penance imposed for their whole life or longer, could do no more than employ the remainder of their days in performing it, and for the greater security, to shut themselves up in a convent. But they were sometimes eased by a commutation of satisfactory works, which, in every age, were changed, according to the strength

* Pet. Dam. Opusc. 8. Gomorr. c. 10, 11, 12, &c.

† Greg. VII. lib. 7. Ep. 10.

and zeal of the Penitents. St Peter Damian testifies that these equivalent penances were commonly received in his time, and even gives us an estimate of them. Three thousand stripes, with a severe discipline, might ransom one year of an ordinary penance; and ten psalms, sung while a person kept continually whipping himself, made a thousand stripes; so that the whole Psalter was equivalent to five years penance.* And, as in virtue of the Communion of Saints, we know that God sometimes pardons sinners in consideration of the prayers and good works of their brethren, there were some Saints, in those times, who consecrated themselves to do penance for others.

The most illustrious of these was St Dominic Loricatus, or the Curiaffer, so called, because he wore next to his skin a coat of mail, which he never put off but to discipline himself.† This he did in so severe a manner, and so frequently, joining thereto fasting, watching, praying on his knees, with such other austerities, that we are frightened at the account St Peter Damian, who was his Director, gives us of them. The softness of our manners can, with difficulty, accommodate itself to a devotion so severe, of which nevertheless we see many instances in the Saints of these times. But it is to be believed, that God inspired them to act in this manner, on account of the age they lived in.

* Pet. Dam. Vit. S. S.—Rod. & Dom. c. 8, 10, &c.

† Id. ib. c. 8, 11.

They had to do with a people so perverse and so rebellious, that it was necessary to strike them with sensible objects. Reasoning and exhortations had little effect on ignorant and brutish men, accustomed to blood and plunder. They even would have looked upon, as nothing, moderate austerities, as they had been brought up in all the toils of war, and always wore armour.

But when they saw St Boniface, the disciple of St Romuald, go bare-foot in the coldest countries, and St Dominic Loricatus make himself all blood with the discipline, they then comprehended that these Saints really loved God and detested sin. They would have made no account of mental prayer; but they saw clearly that a person prayed when he recited psalms. In a word, they could not doubt but that these Saints loved their neighbour, since they did penance for others. Affected by this exterior, they became more docile; they hearkened to these Priests and Monks, whose lives they admired; and many were converted. Besides scourging one's self, wearing girdles of iron round the waist, and other means of mortifying the flesh, were no new inventions. Theodoret gives us many instances thereof in his Religious History, and St Simeon the Stylite alone suffices to authorize the most astonishing austerities. The Rule of St Columban, who lived about the close of the sixth century, punished most of the faults committed by the Monks with so many stripes
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of the whip; and we see afterwards many Saints voluntarily give themselves the discipline.

Among the penal works substituted in lieu of the canonical penances, one of the most usual was going a pilgrimage to some famous places of devotion; such as Jerusalem, Rome, Tours, Compostella. As early as the ninth century, there were complaints of abuses having crept into this practice. Priests and Clergymen, guilty of crimes, pretended thus to cleanse and reinstate themselves. The Lords took hence an opportunity of raising taxes on their subjects, to furnish expences for their journey; and it afforded a pretence to the poor to beg and turn vagabonds.* There were some, who ran naked about the country, loaded with irons, so as to terrify every body: And it is true, that for murders and other atrocious crimes, the Penitents were sometimes ordered to spend thus their lives, wandering about, and bearing the marks of their unhappy state.† But never did Pilgrimages become so frequent as after the eleventh century. Universal hostilities becoming less frequent, and Pilgrims being considered as persons sacred, every body went to these places of devotion, even Princes and Kings. King Robert passed the Lent in going Pilgrimages, and took a journey to Rome.‡ Bishops scrupled not to abandon their Churches for this purpose.

* Conc. Cabill. 21. an. 813.
an. 787. c. 73.

† Helgand.

‡ Capit. Aquisgran.

Pilgrimages to Jerusalem, among others, became very frequent about the year 1033.*

§ LXIV.—*Crusades and Indulgences.*

HENCE came the Crusades or holy Wars. For those who took the Cross were no more than armed Pilgrims, who assembled together in large companies. These enterprises were become necessary now. There was no single Christian Prince sufficiently powerful to stop the progress of the Mahometans, the declared enemies of all those who would not embrace their Religion. They had pillaged, with impunity, Italy for the space of two hundred years: They were masters of Sicily, and almost of all Spain. By the strength of the Crusaders they have been driven from all that part of Europe, and considerably weakened in Egypt and Syria. But the Discipline of the Church gained nothing by these Crusades; and these undertakings, though pious in themselves, were, in my opinion, one principal cause of the relaxation of the Discipline of Penance. For it was then Plenary Indulgences began, that is to say, the remission of all the canonical Penances in favour of any one, who would undertake this journey, and the service of God; for so was this war called; and it was this extraordinary pardon, which drew so many to engage in it. It was very

* Ep. Ben. VII. ad Episc. Bulgar.

pleasing

pleasing and agreeable to a set of Nobles, who knew nothing but hunting and fighting; to see changed into a journey for war, those laborious penances, which consisted in fasting and praying, and which was above all in those times, abstaining from the use of arms and horses. Penance became a pleasure; for the fatigues of travelling were trifling to people accustomed to those of war; and the change of places and objects is an amusement. There was scarce any thing could affect them in a sensible manner, but leaving for so long a time their country and families.

However, so long a journey, and so much company, were not a proper remedy to amend sinners. The spirit of compunction could scarce be consistent with such dissipation. People naturally seek to alleviate the tediousness of a march by entertaining chat, and the least discreet are those who talk most. The providing subsistence and quarters very much employ the mind, as well as a variety of adventures met with. A person easily indulges himself in too much eating and sleeping, that he may recover from any extraordinary fatigue. Life can neither be regular nor uniform. Add to this the different manners of so many countries they had to pass through, to go to the Holy Land, the occasions of quarrels from difference of humours, customs, languages: Occasions of debauchery in plentiful countries, and from an intercourse with nations extremely corrupted.

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And, indeed, it appears from history, that the armies of the Crusaders were not only like other armies, but still worse: That every vice prevailed among them, which they brought from their own country, as also those they had learned from foreign countries. In a word, if these journies served to punish any sins, they were much less the sins of the Latin Christians, than those of the Infidels and schismatics, to whom they were dreadful scourges of God.

A great number of Bishops, Priests, and Monks took the Cross: Some from a motive of real zeal, many from a spirit of libertinism; and they thought themselves allowed to bear arms against the Infidels. One may easily judge what a relaxation of Discipline such a licence as this must produce, in conjunction with the ignorance that had prevailed so long. Even the best intentioned Popes were obliged to tolerate part of these evils. Private disorders were to be connived at, to give success to the main enterprize: Great condescension was to be used towards the Chiefs, while they successfully supported the business of Religion, tho' they dishonoured it by their crimes. The Indulgence of the Crusades was extended to those who bore arms against the heretics, who were not only rebels to the Church, but also to their Prince; such as the Albigeois in France: and it was in general extended to all the wars, in which Religion was thought to have any concern.

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It did not appear just, that women and other persons, whom age or condition of life rendered incapable of bearing arms, should be deprived of this favour: and therefore the Indulgence was communicated to them, when they contributed their alms towards the expences of the war. Alms likewise applied to other pious purposes seemed as fit to redeem sins. Indulgences, either plenary or limited, were granted to those who contributed to the building of Churches, which afforded most of the Bishops the means of building those magnificent Cathedrals which we still admire. The same was the case with the foundation of Hospitals and their support; especially those of the two new kinds which were then very frequent, viz. for Pilgrims and Lepers. There were likewise Indulgences in favour of the poor, annexed to other good works. Thus satisfactory works became almost arbitrary. The canonical penances, no longer in practice, were soon forgotten, and Confession was then the most difficult part of Penance.

§ LXV.—*Multitude of Doctors, or Teachers.*

THIS fall of ancient Discipline did not happen until the thirteenth century. It had made its way through the darkness of the preceding ages, by dint of Tradition; and the bare ignorance of it was less hurtful to it, than were the new modes of study.

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For it was then that pure authority began to be discarded in the schools, and great stress to be laid on reasoning. Aristotle came into fashion, and the subtleties of Dialectic and Metaphysics, borrowed from the Arabians, were in high esteem. The scarcity of ancient books, and the difficulty of understanding them, on account of the change in language and manners, invited people to apply more to speculation, and to the reading of modern authors. Thus Scholastic Divinity got the upper hand of Positive: the Master of Sentences, or Gratian, were more read than the Fathers; and a figurative sense was more sought after in the Scriptures, than the literal sense.

Most of the Bishops, from the twelfth century, applied very little to preaching and the instruction of their Clergy. They allowed themselves to be overwhelmed with temporal concerns. The Laity, particularly the Princes, being totally ignorant, could not do without their counsel. Bishops or Abbots were the Chancellors and Ministers of state: they were the Judges in almost all concerns. Without seeking any business from without, their own temporal Lordships furnished them with too much. They had often wars to maintain; they had places to fortify, and troops to assemble. Grand equipages to keep up at all times, large families, and all sorts of officers. In the midst of so many employments, the spiritual, which ought to be the principal, was often neglected. Thus

Studies, Preaching, the Administration of the Sacraments, fell to the lot of the Doctors, who had been brought up in the Universities, which were just then formed.

Their institution appeared extremely useful ever since the unhappiness of the times had interrupted the studies of the Cathedrals and Monasteries. It was easier to find good Masters in a single town, such as Paris or Toulouse, than in each Diocese; and a single Doctor might train up a number of scholars. It seemed, moreover, that a Priest who applied himself to the study of Theology alone, ought to be more learned than a Bishop taken up with so many other functions; and that the scholars would apply more to their studies in a place where their studies would be their only employment. But experience has shewn great inconveniences arising from the studies in the Universities. Simple Priests, such as were these Doctors, had not the same authority over a multitude of scholars who were strangers, and little known, as a Bishop had over his Clergy. They often mispent their time in treating of questions that had more of curiosity in them than utility; and they might be deceived in the choice of the subjects they treated, as not being practised in the direction of souls. The scholars, on their side, learned nothing but speculation, and were not trained to the Ecclesiastical functions, which they had not an opportunity of performing: And as their youth was spent in this state, they found no longer time to exercise

ercise the functions of the lower orders. But the greatest evil was, that being no longer under the eyes of their parents, they easily fell into a corruption of morals, so common in large towns, where there is so great a concourse of strangers.

This was remedied, in some manner, by the institution of Colleges, first for the Regulars, and afterwards for a certain number of Seculars: and it must be owned, that the Colleges, like the Monasteries, became asylums for piety and morals, as well as for doctrine. That of the Sorbonne in particular has served as a model to the most holy societies of Priests. The whole body of the University seems to have been raised by God, to maintain, in these latter ages, the Tradition of doctrine and discipline. The extinction of the grand schism at Avignon was owing to them; and their censures were of great weight in stopping the torrent of the last heresies.

The Mendicant orders came into the Universities a short time after they were formed, and they came very opportunely to the assistance of the Church in those miserable times. But these Religious, however holy and however zealous they might be, were not Pastors, who had the care of a particular flock, or any regular jurisdiction: They were rather so many Missionaries, who, according to the orders of their Superiors, went through every Diocese, labouring in the conversion of heretics and sinners. They

laboured with success: but the good they did was not always sufficiently lasting, because they could not continue to give instructions to such as they converted, nor enter into the necessary detail of the amendment of their morals, nor to watch over them as long as was necessary to strengthen them in their good purposes. They could only act thus with regard to a few individuals, who voluntarily put themselves under their direction. Therefore the fruit they produced could not be so general, as when each Bishop and each Pastor laboured in the sanctification of all his people.

In a word, the authority of the ordinary Hierarchy, was no longer so often united with that of teaching and sanctity of life, as in the first ages. It was the same, with regard to studies. As the Masters, whether Seculars or Regulars, who were in possession of the chairs, had scarce any other authority, but that of their personal merit; the students were at liberty to follow whatever Master they chose: And hence that diversity of opinions and sects in matters, on which it allowed to dispute. The Laity were likewise at liberty to follow the Preachers who best suited their taste, and to choose to themselves other Confessors than their Pastors.* Thus among such a number of Priests, bad Christians could not fail finding those who would give them Absolution too easily: and such as wanted to deceive them-

* Thomass. Dif. P. IV. lib. 1. c. 69. n. 21.

selves or to deceive others, did not leave off coming to Church, and approaching the sacraments, without any change of life.

Even the main body of the Doctors yielded to the corruption of the people; and several considerable points of relaxation have passed into maxims. Ignorance of ancient manners was the principal cause of this; and customs introduced an age or two since, have passed for customs immemorial. It is surprising, for instance, that in St Thomas's time, it was no longer remembered how fasting had been practised in the preceding age. For St Bernard assures us, that in his time, every body, without distinction, fasted in Lent until evening; Kings and Princes, Clergy and Laity, Nobles and Tradesmen, rich and poor.* Nevertheless, St Thomas assures us, that in his time, the fast continued only until None; and even pretends to prove, that Christians ought not to fast in any other manner; and that fasting until evening belonged unto the old law.†—So easy is it to find reasons for authorising all sorts of practices, when a person is ignorant of facts.

This ignorance has caused the forgotten practices of antiquity to be treated as novelties. It has made people believe that the authority of the moderns is more to be relied on, in practice, than that of the ancients, of whom they have a confused notion, that their

* In Cap. Jejun. ad. 1.

† S. Thom. 2. 2. q. 147. art. 7.

manners were quite different from ours, without examining if this difference be what constitutes a Christian; or in things indifferent in their nature, such as dress and language. And as liberty has been taken to start new questions, and to invent new subtleties, there have at last been found Casuists, who have grounded their moral doctrine more on human reasoning, than on the Scripture and Tradition: As if JESUS-CHRIST had not taught us all truth, as well regarding Morals as Faith: and as if we still had to seek like the ancient Philosophers.

§ LXVI.—*Succession of sound Doctrine and good Examples in all Times.*

IT is not my design to enter on a detail of the disorders which followed from this relaxation in the maxims of Morality. They are but too well known; and nothing is farther from my intention, than to describe the manners of bad Christians, as their manners do not make them Christians, but the profession of the Christian doctrine. I have only to represent those manners which distinguish true Christians from all the rest of the world. Now God has never abandoned his Church so far, but that these manners have still continued in it. Whatever way it has been governed in different ages, either immediately by Bishops, or by Priests commissioned by them, or sent by the
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the Popes: whether by Seculars or Regulars; by the ordinary Pastors, or by foreign Missionaries, Religion has always been the same, and the body of its doctrine the same. Its Faith has always been perfectly pure, and the great maxims of Morality have ever remained unshaken. It was always considered as a certain truth, that the law of God, explained according to Tradition and the authority of the Ancients, was to be observed; and that the Saints, publicly honoured by the Church, were to be the models of Christians.

There have been all along some of these models. Every age has had its Apostles, who have gone to preach the Faith to Infidels:—Every age has had its Martyrs:—Virgins and true Penitents there have ever been in great numbers: For it is the sincere desire of doing penance, that, from the eleventh century, has introduced so many new orders of Monks, as St Bernard observes.* God has raised, from time to time, some extraordinary men to keep up sound doctrine and to awaken piety. What can be compared to this same St Bernard? Did he not unite, in his own person, the zeal of the Prophets, the knowledge and learning of the greatest Doctors of the Church, and the most perfect mortification of the Solitaries, without speaking of his miracles, which may be compared to those of the Apostles? Much, without doubt, is due to Innocent III. and

* Serm. de S. Andr. Vit. S. Malach.

to the other great and learned Popes of those times; to the Master of Sentences, to St Thomas, and to others, who have reduced the study of Theology to a method. St Francis has set an example of the Gospel practised to the letter, and of an humility and a mortification worthy of the Apostolic ages. And thus, from age to age, from generation to generation, has God preserved in his Church the Tradition, not only of sound doctrine, but also of the practice of every virtue.

It is therefore true, that JESUS-CHRIST is *to-day*, as well as *yesterday*, and that he will be the same in all ages.† In vain, for a long time past, have bad Christians endeavoured to render useless the respect which has always been preserved for antiquity, and the examples of the Saints, by supposing that, in the first ages of Christianity, men were of a different nature, their constitutions stronger, were more able to bear fasting and other austerities; their minds were more docile, and that all the virtues were then more easy to practise. If we tell them that St Peter and St Paul lived in poverty and labour, they answer, they were Apostles.† That St Anthony and St Martin performed great penances: they were Saints. St Augustine made his Clergy live in Community, and lived himself in a very plain manner, though a Bishop: 'that was very well for those times.' One would say that these words, *Sanctity, Antiquity, Primitive Church*, are lawful exceptions to excuse our-

* Heb. xiii. 8.

† V. Chrys. de Compunct.

selves

selves from the practices of penance, the continual study of the law of God, withdrawing from the pleasures and vanities of the world, from disinterestedness, and that exemplary life which the Clergy ought to lead. They think they answer every thing by distinguishing the times.

They pretend to respect antiquity, but in fact they despise it. They regard it as a time of miracles, they despair of imitating it; they do not study it, they do not wish to be acquainted with it, because this acquaintance with it is a secret reproach of our disorders. We are willing to consider as impossible, what we have not the strength to practise. Those who have read the Harangue of the Nuncio Alexander, given us by the Cardinal Palavicini in the beginning of his History, know how far these maxims were pushed.

“The Church, (say they) was strong and vigorous in its youth, it produced heroic virtues: It is now in its old age, and on the decline. It has had its spring and its summer; it is now in its winter.” What is the meaning of all these metaphors? Do they pretend that the duration of the Church, in fact, resembles the course of years or the succession of them in human life? Will any one dare to say, that it was imperfect in its beginning, and acquired its perfection by length of time; and that it must decay, like perishable creatures, or the works of man? But again, in what do they pretend that this change
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is come to pass since the first preaching of the Gospel? Is it in human nature? Experience and the faith of History teach us the contrary. Is it in the law of God? Is it in his grace? He has neither less power, nor less goodness than he had formerly: Nor has JESUS-CHRIST any where told us that his Church was to be governed by different rules, at different times. The change of the old law, and the abolition of the ceremonies were expressly foretold; but as to the Gospel, it is to be preached both to the extremities of the earth, and until the end of the world. Not only its mysteries are to be taught, but also the observance of all the precepts of JESUS-CHRIST; and it is not in vain that he is with us, even to the end of the world.* Let us not therefore flatter ourselves with frivolous excuses; but let us lay the blame of the relaxation in our manners on our own ignorance and on our own weakness. It is not less dangerous, said Pope Gregory VII. to attack the moral doctrine and discipline of antiquity, than to attack its Faith: the one and the other are handed down to us by the same Tradition.

* Matt. xxxviii.

§ LXVII.—*Some Abuses tolerated, and how.*

THE Church, it is true, at times, tolerates some abuses that have taken too deep a root; waiting for a favourable opportunity of retrenching them; and she has, sometimes, granted, to a purity of heart, mitigations of the ancient discipline. The Rule of receiving the Communion four times a year still subsisted in the ninth century. It was badly observed afterwards, and Peter of Blois* testifies, that in his time, that is, in the 12th century, most Christians communicated only once a-year. The Church has accommodated herself to this practice, and has made it a rule of discipline in the Council of Lateran.† It had forbidden the saying of Low Masses during the time of High Mass, for fear of causing any disturbance in the service;‡ custom, however, has got the better of the prohibition. In St Thomas's time,|| now five hundred years ago, the fast continued until three o'clock in the afternoon, and no mention is made of any more than of one meal: Since that time, the meal has begun to be taken at noon-day, and a collation has been allowed. I place likewise, in the rank of these mitigations in discipline the penances being left to the discretion of the Confessors, the fre-

* Serm. 16. † Can. Omnis utriusque 1215.

‡ Conc. Raven. IV. 1317. rub. 12. || 2. 2. q.

§47. a. 7.

quent grant of Indulgences, and the mitigation of several of the Monastic Rules. It has been thought that the Religious, less perfect than the Rule wishes them to be, would still be more perfect, than if they lived in the world; and that it was better to abate something of the primitive fast of Lent, than to suffer it to be totally abolished. But we are not to take any advantages of these condescensions, so as to imagine that the way to heaven is become now easier; that we are more happy than our ancestors; or that the Bishops and Popes of these latter ages have thought themselves wiser than their predecessors.

We need only read the Constitutions and Canons, which have authorized any of these relaxations in discipline, to see that the Church has always done it with regret. There are even many of these mitigations, that have been introduced only by custom; and, in the mean time, the Church has carefully retained certain practices, to put us in mind of what was formerly done. Thus the singing of None or Vespers before the meal on fasting-days; all the formularies of Ordinations, and other public actions, are like so many repeated protestations against any one's pretending to plead prescription against the ancient Rules.

There are some abuses which the Church has ever condemned. Such were those absurd spectacles or shews, which some had the rashness to introduce even into the Churches,

and which were forbidden by the Council of Basil.* Such were the profane merry-makings on holidays, the remains of which we still see at Martinmas, Twelfth-day, and on the Feasts of the Patrons of the Village, or what we call country-wakes in England; as also the excesses of the Carnival, which can have no other principle than a regret to enter upon Lent.† Could the Apostles and their Disciples ever have thought, that this holy preparation for Easter, would one day become a pretext for dissoluteness!

The Saints and all true Christians have ever risen up against these abuses. It is well known with what vigour St Charles repressed them, and how much he laboured to bring back the spirit of antiquity, even in the smallest practices of Religion. The Council of Trent, and the other Councils held since, in different Provinces, to enforce its decrees, breathe nothing else: and so many reformatations which we have seen of Religious Orders during the last century, had no other design than to conform to their primitive institution. St Theresa could not bear, that, under pretence of discretion, and for fear of scandal, the fervour of those should be stopped, who wished to imitate the Saints of the first ages. She complained that this discretion was the ruin of people; and maintained, that, in her time, about the middle of the sixteenth century, men were capable of the virtues of the Primitive

* Sess. 21. c. 11.

† V. Syn. Vigor. an. 1240. c. 4.

Church. It is on this occasion she relates the life of St Peter of Alcantara, of which she was an eye-witness.

§ LXVIII.—*The Use to be made of this Treatise.*

FOLLOWING these great examples, I thought it would be of service to represent to the whole world, what were formerly, and what still ought to be, the Manners of the Christians. I have said nothing but what is well known to people of learning, and taken out of the books which they have before them: they will see that I have omitted very much. But most of the facts I have mentioned, are not sufficiently known to the commonalty of the Faithful, and may edify them. They will here see that they must not reduce the Christian Religion to simple practices, as many believe: that is, to saying some short Prayers evening and morning, to assisting at a private Mass, where no instructions are given, on Sundays; to distinguishing Lent from other times only by a difference of food, and to dispensing with themselves from keeping it, on slight pretences; to approaching the sacraments, but seldom, and with so little affection, that the most solemn Festivals become to them disagreeable and troublesome days; while they live, in other respects, as much taken up with business or what pleases the senses, as Heathens themselves could be. These are not the
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Christians whose manners I have endeavour-
ed to describe.

Perhaps also some of those who have separated from us under pretence of a Reformation, will here see that their schism is ill grounded; that the Primitive Church was not such as they represented it to themselves, and that our maxims are different from those imputed to us. They will see that their Reformation too rashly condemned several very ancient practices, such as Communion in one kind, the veneration or respect shewn to Relics and Images, Prayer for the Dead, Abstinence from certain meats, Vows of Continency, the Monastic life; and that, under the pretext of removing superstition, they have introduced a gross sort of Christianity, where no one is seen to embrace any of the evangelical counsels; and where even the precepts of Christianity are no better followed, than among those from whom they have separated.

Lastly, I hope that a view of manners so holy, may make some impresson on those who are blind enough, to confound the true Religion with those that are false, and have been introduced either by error or a false policy. If any of them would reflect on the great changes which the Gospel has produced in the manners of all nations, and on the difference there ever has been between true Christians and Infidels, he will see that Christianity rests on a more solid foundation than he imagined; and that it

must be believed that it was established by great miracles, since it would be a thing still more incredible, that such a change could be brought about without miracles. These miracles had made so strong an impression, that no body thought of calling them in question, till very lately. To speak of what we distinctly know, it is only now about four hundred years, since some Italians, men of parts, but totally ignorant of Religion, being shocked at several abuses they saw, introduced this licentiousness of thought. Charmed with the beauties of the Greek and Latin writers, and with what they therein discovered of the politics of these people, and of their way of life, they had no taste for any thing else; the more so, as the maxims of these ancients accorded better than ours, with the corruption of the human heart, and the manners of the common herd of mankind.

The late heresies have encreased the evil. Disputes on the very fundamentals of Religion have staggered or destroyed Faith in many, who have nevertheless continued, from different temporal motives, outwardly to profess the Catholic Religion. And among the Protestants, the number has been much greater of people, who, unrestrained by any authority, have pushed to the very farthest, the consequences of their bad principles, and are come to know not what to believe, and to consider Religion only as a piece of state policy. This baneful doctrine has easily

sily spread itself. Young people having heard their Fathers, or those who appeared to them men of sense, pass some paltry joke on the subject of Religion, or even seriously declare that there were no grounds for believing it, contented themselves with that, and examined no farther, finding these maxims more agreeable to their passions. There is a flattering vanity in distinguishing one's self from the ignorant vulgar, and in rising above the simplicity of our forefathers. Sloth also finds its account in remaining uncertain, or in deciding at random, without giving one's self the trouble of examining any farther into the matter. But, let people say what they will, the facts I have advanced will remain certain: and it will be always true, as Origen often repeats against Celsus, that JESUS CHRIST has reformed the world, and filled it with virtues unknown until his time.

§ LXIX.—CONCLUSION.

THIS is what I had to say on the Manners of the Israelites and those of the Christians. Such was the exterior of the life of the Faithful of the Old and New Testament. In the first discourse, there may be seen, as appears to me, the best use of temporal blessings, and the most rational manner of passing through the life we are to lead here on earth. In the second Discourse, I wish-

ed to shew what the life of those is, whose conversation is in heaven, and who, though still in the flesh, live only by the spirit: that life wholly spiritual and wholly supernatural, which is the proper effect of the grace of JESUS-CHRIST. Too happy should I be, if, by means of this work, any body would form a just idea of a rational and Christian life, and would seriously set about practising it: I should then be easily comforted with respect to the different judgments which may be passed on this work, and the defects which may be found in it.



THE END.

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